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ABSTRACT

This first volume of "Portals: A Journal of the Idaho Council International Reading Association" presents those interested in literacy development with a new forum for discussion of ideas, trends, and issues related to literacy teaching and learning. Articles in the first issue are: "Caleb's Journal" (Ann Desaulniers); "Literature That Stirs the Dust and Stirs the Soul" (Stan Steiner and Pat Ware); "A Reading and Writing Approach to Science" (Nancy DeLacy); and "Don Holdaway Interview" (Tim Morrison). Articles in the second issue are: "Reading: Unplugged" (Phillip N. Venditti); "The Caldecott and Newbery Award Winners: An Interview with Walter Lorraine" (Norma Sadler); "Integrating Literacy and Thought through Play: The Teacher's Role" (Sally Pena and others); and "Unexpected Success" (Penny Roundtree). The volume also includes news related to the Idaho Council International Reading Association. (RS)

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ED 373 316

PORTALS: A JOURNAL OF THE IDAHO COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION

Volume 1, Issues 1 and 2

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A Journal of the Idaho Council
International Reading Association

FALL 1993

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PORTALS is published semi-annually by the Idhao Council. International Reading Association. Membership in the ICIRA automatically includes a subscription to PORTALS. The journal is intended to provide ICIRA members and others interested in literacy development with a forum for discussion of ideas, trends, and issues related to literacy teaching and learning, as well as dissemination of news related to the ICIRA and its local and national affiiliates. Articles by teachers, researchers, and others are encouraged. Because the ICIRA serves as an open forum, items published in PORTALS do not necessarily reflect endorsement by ICIRA, its officers, or members.

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Information to Authors
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Front cover Artwork
Chris Harris, a student at Les Bois Junior High School, Boise, ID

PORTALS

A Journal of the Idaho Council
International Reading Association

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A Message From The President

Beverly J. Klug
President, ICIRA

Dear ICIRA Member,

Greetings! I am so happy to have a chance to communicate with you, especially with the introductory issue of our new journal. One of the goals of our organization is to have a journal that will carry information that is relevant and useful to all of our members. We feel that with the new format and focus of the journal, we will be able to do just that. We hope that you, too, will agree that this issue represents a new direction for our state organization which will be able to meet the needs of all of our constituents.

As we have begun the new school year, several thoughts have entered my mind. As many of you know, I am also directing the Idaho US WEST TEAMS* Initiative (*Teacher Excellence Appropriate for our Multiethnic/Multicultural Society). As such, I have been given opportunities to meet with people throughout the state and to learn about the many exciting programs which are occurring in districts. I believe that there is a direct tie-in between our efforts of creating more multiethnic/multicultural awareness as we explore these programs and our efforts in creating classrooms where the integrated language arts or whole language programs are being utilized. This is especially true as students read about different cultures, write about different cultures, explore their own cultural histories, and listen to individuals who are invited to classrooms to talk about different cultures. What better gifts to give to our students than to be able to expand their information about their world by utilizing the tools of language arts!

We are living in such an exciting time as teachers: a time when the paradigm of teaching is changing from rote skills to an emphasis on creating knowledge by utilizing what students know and can add to their schema. The analogy of patchwork quilt is one that I also return to: as we teachers learn more information and branch out into different areas, we are creating our own quilts with the knowledge and experiences we are adding to our repertoire. I am proud to be part of an organization which promotes the possibilities of learning and is forward-looking in its direction. Thank you for your contributions toward making our organization such an important and viable one for teachers in Idaho.

Sincerely,
Beverly J. Klug
President, ICIRA

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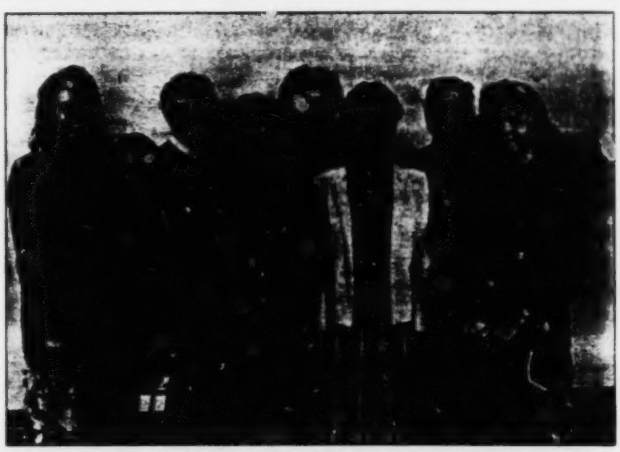
Pictured below in the front row from left to right in the front row are Pamala Ward, Lynne Ball, Beverly Klug and Susan Fleming Buescher. In the back row is Caroline Bitterwolf, Marilyn Howard, Cheryl Sisco and Kristie Stratford.



From: *The Idea of Order at Key West*

Oh! Blessed rage for order pale Ramon,
The maker's rage to order words of the sea,
Words of the fragrant portals, dimly-starred,
And of ourselves and of our origins,
In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds.

Wallace Stevens

Welcome To Portals

by Lee Dubert, coeditor

Welcome to PORTALS, the new ICIRA journal. After reading this first edition, we on the editorial board, hope that hordes of you will be inspired to write an article for the journal. In our conversations with members at the leadership meeting this June several concerns that we think many readers might have were discussed. We'd like to respond to those concerns in an imaginary dialogue with you.

"But I'm not writer, I'm only a reading teacher."

You are exactly the person we want to hear from. We are working in a state that has, because of our terrain, some difficulty keeping the lines of communication open. It's not easy to get teachers together. We need to find ways to talk with each other about issues that concern us all. No one else is going to open the doors to discussion of the issues of literacy development that we find so important and consuming. Look through the professional publications that have crossed your desk or circular file in the last month. How many articles have you read that really speak directly to the concerns of teachers in Idaho? (If you've read some, send a copy to us because we'd like to read them.) All of us will benefit from reading about what other teachers are trying and doing in Idaho to develop literacy.

"Well I see your point, but what would I write about?"

Anything concerning literacy development that you want. Stories about your classroom and students are a good beginning; both successes and failures. Tell the stories of individual students' successes and failures. Tell about the questions you are pursuing in your classroom. (Like, how you got farmer Frank's boy Freddie to read a novel. How you used the sparse language spoken by a child from an isolated mountainous territory to write eloquent poems.)

"But I'm no expert. Why would anyone want to read about what's happening in my classroom?"

When you do have the opportunity to talk with other teachers in your building, district, or area, aren't you interested in what they are doing? We can all learn and get ideas from each other. Because of the difficulties imposed by geography, it is important that we find ways to communicate with each other. By the simple fact that ICIRA has 1,600 members willing to pay dues it seems obvious that we are interested in learning. We're certain that you'd like to learn from each other. There are already many professional journals that offer information by "experts." The limitation of these journals is that they don't often speak to the specific problems of teachers in a rural, often isolated, western context. We hope that PORTALS will offer a format for the discussion of these issues, the ones that often can't find a place in national or international journals.

> Feeling the support of a community in the "fight" to change instructional practices, to secure funding for additional books, to find answers to the issues of working with our specific school population, and other related professional concerns can make all the difference for a single teacher or a group of colleagues in a school.

"That makes sense, but it's hard to get motivated or find the time needed to write an article."

Shortage of time to do everything we want plagues us all. We hope that through developing a community of teachers who write, think, and read about issues in Idaho, there will be enough of a "payoff" that many of you will make the time to write. Most of us on the editorial team began our professional careers with involvements in our local and state IRA associations. All of us have

found that the involvement in a community of teachers who are interested in literacy development has nurtured our professional growth and sustained us in times of uncertainty. Certainly, at the present time in Idaho, it seems as if teachers of literacy need to band together to advocate for support and renewal. Feeling the support of a community in the "fight" to change instructional practices, to secure funding for additional books, to find answers to the issues of working with our specific school population, and to address other related professional concerns can make all the difference for a single teacher or a group of colleagues in a school. We're hoping that PORTALS can serve as one of the forums to build this sense of community. Officers of ICIRA and other members who have worked within local or state organizations feel a sense of community. Through PORTALS this community will be extended to all members of ICIRA.

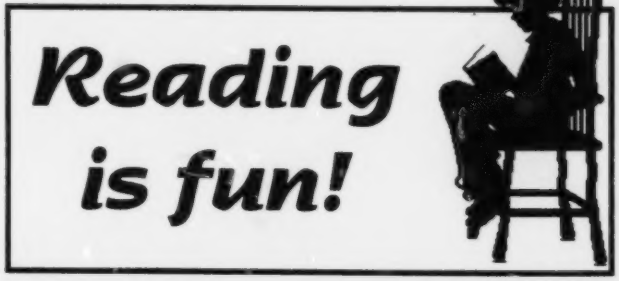
"You've pretty much convinced me, but I don't know how to write an article for publication in a journal. What if I don't do it right?"

Most professional journals require that authors adhere to a specific style book or manuals. Although, when published, articles in PORTALS will follow the 3rd edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) at the time that authors submit articles it is not required that they adhere to those specific stylistic conventions. The coeditors are committed to working with our authors. We do not want teachers to be distanced by the trappings of form or format. Please, feel free to write about what interests and concerns you.

We can help with the rest. (The call for papers at the end of this issue has specific information about how to submit an article.)

"Okay, I'm convinced. Any good ideas about how to get started?"

Every author begins the writing process a little differently. You may want to write with a colleague with whom you've been working. Making a commitment to a coauthor can be very motivating. Some authors find simply talking about an idea for an article with the teacher next door or down the hall gets them started. A few of us have a spouse or friend who is willing to listen to us while we talk through ideas as a preliminary step to writing. If you are really lucky this person may be willing to read drafts of your writing as you go. The hardest part of writing for many seems to be getting started. Sometimes cleaning the desk off helps. Writing is such an individualized process that it's impossible to suggest all the ways authors can begin. The important thing is simply to begin.



What's in the Name

by James Armstrong, coeditor

Every other Wednesday the coeditors of PORTALS meet to plan, discuss, and coordinate our work on the publication. Over our brown-bag lunches, we generate a free-flowing discussion based on reports and updates from each editor and Robyn, our design and layout specialist. (Robyn is officially a Graduate Assistant whose services are "on loan" to us from the Dean's Office in the College of Education at BSU.) Each coeditor has primary responsibility for one publication area and assists in another area. The areas of responsibility include advertising, editorial advisory board, production, sections, and overall organization. From mid-July until mid-September, we spent most of our meeting times sharing ideas and making decisions about how to proceed in each of these areas. Besides our own ideas, we drew heavily on information gathered from Beverly Klug, other state ICIRA officers, and from a number of people with publication experience. Their assistance has been invaluable to our efforts.

By mid-September we had begun to contact businesses about advertising in "the new journal" and had put out a "Call for Papers." At our meeting on September 22, someone asked, "What about changing the name of the journal?" When we had been appointed in mid-July as coeditors, the state officers mentioned that we might want to consider a new name for this publication. After all, this would be a new journal even though it would be combining many of the features of the *Idaho Reading Report* and *Hi Hopes*. For the first two months we had been so busy with the nearly overwhelming task of starting up the journal and starting a new academic year that the issue of a new name had not surfaced.

But at this meeting in late September, we had been looking at other state and regional publications produced by literacy organizations, and we began to think about an appropriate name for the new journal of ICIRA. Some early suggestions were "gem state literacy journal," "Idaho reading journal," and "Idaho reader." Many names bounced around the long table, ranging from the sublime ("literacy gems") to the ordinary ("spud news"). Nothing seemed to catch on. Then someone mentioned that other literacy journals did not always identify the region served by the publication. There was a sense among us that we wanted something that marked a new vision, a moving forward, an exploration of new territory. A new line of names flowed forth: "peaks and pathways," "mountains and plains," "highways to literacy," and "passages." Then Tim suggested "portage." We talked about how a portage might symbolize a literacy process. We began to share thoughts about literacy, how reading opens new areas of information and helps to broaden our perspectives and understandings.

Then Stan came up with a dictionary. After reading the definition of "portage," the group was silent. He skimmed

down a few words and read, "Portal." Tim said, "How about PORTALS?" At that moment each of us made some private connection with the word *portals*. At once, several voices said "Yes" and "All right!" "What does it say in the dictionary about portals?" I asked. Stan read that a portal was "a doorway, entrance, or gate." This name caught us: "Literacy is a doorway to new knowledge" . . . "a gateway to new opportunities." Someone else added, "PORTALS can be a metaphor for the ways that people in ICIRA can communicate their concerns, share their ideas, and ask questions about literacy and literacy instruction."

I found myself feeling pleased about this choice of names. "A gateway to new worlds": I re-connected with my earlier thoughts about "portals." I had a picture of a blue ocean view from a mountain peak, being reminded of Keats' "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." I shuddered in thinking how the European arrival in America meant devastation of the native peoples, how much I had simply enjoyed a tourist's view from Keats' poem, and how my view of European explorers had evolved since I was a fifth grader. Then I remembered some lines of poetry by Wallace Stevens, and the words came flowing out into the meeting:

Oh! Blessed rage for order pale Ramon,
The maker's rage to order words of the sea,
Words of the fragrant portals, dimly-starred,
And of ourselves and of our origins,
In ghostlier demarcations, keener sounds.

I expect that the sounds and rhythms of Stevens' (1954) poem flowed through the minds of the others around the table, just as these words had flowed through my mind the first time I heard them more than twenty years ago when Professor Diane Middlebrook read them to our seminar.

The Idea of Order at Key West (a poem of 55 lines) became part of my thinking as an undergraduate who was just about to leave the world of the university and enter the greater world. Stevens' poem is "about" two men who walk along the beach at sunset and observe a woman singing as she walks by the sea. This experience transforms the speaker of the poem who discovers that the singer, who is the maker of the song, gives order and hence meaning to the nonhuman world. Years after reading this poem, I was interested to read an interview with Adrienne Rich, who stated that when she first read Stevens' poem, she was amazed that it had been written by a man. This statement confirmed for me that this poem explored some of the qualities that make us essentially human, bringing us into harmony with each other and to a recognition of order in the world.

And so for all of us, together and individually, PORTALS came into being. As a new journal, it is built on the traditions established by the *Idaho Reading Report* and *Hi Hopes*. The name PORTALS grew out of our work, brainstorming, and consensus. In our brainstorming session we used dozens of books as our resources. I was reminded again how, when we read and write, we pass through doorways that somehow reconnect us with our past as well as point us toward new places in the future.

REFERENCE

Stevens, Wallace. (1954). The idea of order at Key West. In W. Stevens (Ed.), *The collected poems of Wallace Stevens*, (pp. 128-130). New York: Knopf.

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Honors Council News

by Suzanne Gregg
Honor Council Chairperson

I would like to thank the Reading Councils for all their hard work and effort over the past year. I appreciated the infromation coming to me on or before deadline and I enjoyed reading the exciting activities that are happening within each council.

I am happy to announce that 7 out of 11 councils received Honor Council for 1993. I commend them for their insight and their dedication in continuing to promote literacy.

1993 Honor Council

Horizons
Oregon Trail
Mini Cassia
Panhandle
Snake River
Southeast
Tamarack

Councils should have received checklists for the 1993/1994 ICIRA Honor Council Program. Each required item has a due date. Please check your lists! The lists of IRA Council Members and Council Membership Roster are due the middle of January. I encourage those councils who have not received Honor Council to get involved.

Caleb's Journal

by Anne Desaulniers

Caleb's Journal is the story of a six-year-old boy named Caleb Shaw who has a few normal problems: a pesky younger brother, a pregnant mother, and a best friend who has moved away. Caleb has another nagging problem: his first-grade teacher wants him to write in a journal every day. Caleb feels that he can't write after comparing the letters and words he makes to those in books. When he receives a letter from his best friend, Caleb's desire to write overpowers his lack of confidence. His journal becomes his favorite book.

Caleb dribbled the soccer ball up his steep driveway and kicked it hard into the dark corner of the garage.

"Goal!" He slapped a high five on his mom's old red van parked there, scooped up his soccer ball and strutted into the house. All inside was still.

"Mom!" He waited, but no answer came. "Jerald!" He heard a rustling noise and followed it to the den. His mom was resting on the couch. One hand dangled across her face and she looked crumpled and damp, from her limp hair to her saggy dress.

Mrs. Shaw turned slowly and saw her son's bright blue eyes close to hers. His curly red hair smelled of grass and sun. She smiled and closed her eyes.

"Mom, when does soccer practice start?"

"It's on the calendar," she mumbled. Caleb didn't answer, and Mrs. Shaw opened her eyes and squinted at him. "It starts in two weeks . . . remember? The Saturday after you go back to school."

"Oh, yeah. School . . ."

Even though he liked school most of the time, and he was anxious to be in first grade, there were a few problems. Spending the days indoors made him restless. He would rather be outdoors exploring the dry hills behind his house. He had found a small brown lizard there this summer, found the rocky places where it sunned itself and fed on insects. Sometimes, he would try to guess what the lizard would say if it could talk.

And he'd tell it how lucky it was not to have to write. His fingers struggled with a pencil. It felt as if he were trying to write with a tree. His letters spread all over the page instead of staying in the lines. When he tried to erase, the paper tore and he had to start over. His hand ached with the memory.

Something icy hit his neck and dribbled down his back. "You're dead," squealed his little brother.

"No, you are!" He grabbed Jerald and wrestled the water pistol from his grip. Jerald let out a scream, and Mrs. Shaw's voice was firm. "Boys, settle down. I'm trying to rest."

Caleb stopped. Maybe after the baby was born, his mom wouldn't need so much quiet.

Caleb's eyes flew open as the music from his clock radio blared next to his bed. It can't be time to wake up, he thought. The room is barely light and it's too early. He dozed dreamily. Then a feeling in the pit of his stomach made him squirm. "School starts today," he thought as his eyes opened a second time.

He sat up in bed and remembered another problem with school. "Ben is gone."

Mrs. Livingston put her hand on Caleb's shoulder. Behind her, on the chalkboard, was the word JOURNAL.

"Caleb, do you understand what to do?" his teacher asked.

Caleb watched her left earring. It was a large, brightly painted parrot, and it swayed as she talked. Mrs. Livingston was tall and loved clothes that flashed with color. When Caleb had seen her the first day of school and heard her startling laugh, he had been frightened. When she had told the class that she was scared because it was her first day as a teacher, he had relaxed.

"Caleb?" she repeated, coming closer.

"I think we write something in our notebook." Caleb looked up to see Mrs. Livingston smile.

"You've got it," she said.

He didn't have it, though. He hadn't been listening very well when she had explained this journal thing. That's why he needed Ben. Ben had always seemed to know when he would need to hear the directions again, and could always say it better than the teacher could.

Caleb closed his eyes and tried to remember what Ben looked like. All he could see in his mind was black hair, smiling eyes and a grin. The harder he tried to picture his friend, the fuzzier Ben became. He found a red marker and drew a great thorny lizard with its mouth open wide. Then he began to fill the lizard's mouth with sharp, angry teeth.

The next morning was full of sun and breeze, the way a September Saturday

should be. The soccer field shimmered in the clear air. The Speed Turtles had played hard against the Hot Shots and now the score was tied.

Jerald hopped and shouted from the sidelines. "Go, Turtles! Go, Caleb!"

The ball hit Caleb's foot and shot out ahead of him, and Caleb began to run, kicking the ball first with one foot and then the other. His heart pounded. He could hear people shouting his name as the Hot Shots tried again and again to steal the ball from him. But Caleb moved steadily down the field.

He neared the goal and dribbled one last time to put the ball into position. But suddenly, Caleb tripped and he found himself flat on the ground. He looked up to see the goalie run out of position toward the loose ball.

Caleb jumped to his feet just as the goalie's foot came swinging in for the kick.

He missed! Caleb scrambled to the ball again. The net was wide open. Caleb cocked his foot back and kicked. The ball flew into the goal.

"We won! We won!" The Speed Turtles circled Caleb as the final whistle blew. They jumped and jostled, laughing and hollering. Caleb glanced toward the sidelines and saw Jerald dancing and screaming. Behind Jerald stood their tall, red-headed father, grinning from ear to ear.

Caleb stood alone waiting for the morning bell to ring, watching his breath freeze as he exhaled. He had tried to make a neat ring of frost rise from his mouth like he had seen in a cartoon. He wondered if the breath from his lizard's nostrils would make it look like a little dragon now that the mornings woke to a thin frost.

Caleb kicked at a pile of red leaves which had begun to mound under his favorite tree. As they drifted to the ground, he remembered last spring when he and Ben spent recess time building dirt and twig cities for the small plastic toys they slipped into their pockets from home. He began to kick harder at the leaves.

"Why did Ben's dad make them move, anyway?" he muttered. "It isn't fair!" Leaves flew into the air around him, and soon others joined in, kicking and throwing leaves into the air, laughing high and loud.

"Hey, Caleb," yelled Tara, holding up a small green figure. "Isn't this yours?

Caleb took the toy dinosaur from Tara and looked closely at it. His scowl turned to a grin.

"It's Ben's."

The bell rang, and Caleb ran to get in line, stuffing Ben's dinosaur into his pocket. The sharp edges dug into his leg as he skipped down the hall.

When he hung up his backpack, he heard Tara report that she had found Ben's dinosaur in the leaves and given it to him. "Let me see," said Tom, pressing close to Caleb.

He pulled the plastic toy from his pocket and held it on his flattened palm.

"What's that?" asked Mrs. Livingston as she walked by.

"It's Ben's dinosaur," said Caleb.

Her face held a puzzled look. "Ben? Who's Ben?"

"He was here in kindergarten, but he moved. We used to play dinosaurs under the big tree. Tara found this under the leaves."

"Cool!" said Mrs. Livingston. "I'd like to hear more about Ben . . . sounds like you were special friends."

Caleb sighed. He suspected that Mrs. Livingston didn't really want to hear about anything. He guessed she wanted him to write about Ben in his journal.

Caleb sat down at his desk and opened his journal to the first page. There was the lizard he had drawn the first day of school. He turned the pages slowly. On each page was a picture, some in pencil and others in marker or crayon.

He loved looking at the drawing of the soccer game he had won for the Speed Turtles. He wished he could write some words to go with that picture. He wanted to tell the story of that day and how great it made him feel to remember it.

Everyone else wrote words. He didn't want to write at school, in front of everyone. When Mrs. Livingston made the class write something, like a book report, Caleb had learned how to dawdle and take trips to the bathroom so he didn't have to put many words on the page.

One day, he had tried to practice writing at home in his room, where no one was watching him. Even though his letters weren't quite as wild as they had been in kindergarten, they still didn't look at all like letters in books. His words had looked nothing like those his mom and dad wrote. He had realized Tara and Tom wrote better than he could, even when he took his time. He had torn the paper in tiny pieces and hidden them deep in the kitchen garbage, under

One day, he had tried to practice writing at home in his room, where no one was watching him. Even though his letters weren't quite as wild as they had been in kindergarten, they still didn't look at all like letters in books. His words had looked nothing like those his mom and dad wrote.

a banana peel.

Caleb's mother tried to squeeze into his desk at school. "I guess that's not going to work." She laughed as her husband helped her stand again.

"Please sit here," Mrs. Livingston said, motioning to her own chair. "These little desks aren't too comfortable, especially when you're going to have a baby." Mrs. Shaw sank onto its cushions with a smile.

Other parents filed into the room and filled it with greetings and laughter. Mrs. Livingston walked to the front of the room. "Welcome to Back-to-School Night," she began. "I would like to tell you a little about your child's year so far, and then give you time to look around the room and ask questions."

As Mrs. Livingston talked, Caleb's parents looked at each paper. They were pleased to see how much he had learned already. Then they came to Caleb's journal. Each page had a different picture. There was a large scraggly-toothed lizard at the beginning, pictures of soccer games, trees, snowpeople, and a house. There was the camping trip he had taken with his father last summer, and on the next page, a drawing of the trout he had caught. On many pages, near the bottom, Caleb had drawn a little person with rounded arms and legs, and a round tummy.

Soon Mrs. Livingston ended her talk and walked through the room, chatting with parents.

"Mrs. Livingston, I have a question," said Caleb's father. "Didn't you say that the journals were for writing?"

"Yes," answered Mrs. Livingston.

Mr. Shaw looked puzzled. "Caleb's journal just has pictures."

Mrs. Livingston sat down next to Caleb's parents. "Caleb doesn't seem ready to write many words yet. But he does tell wonderful stories about his drawings."

Mrs. Shaw was thoughtful. "Could he bring this journal home to share with us one day?"

"That's a great idea," said Mrs. Livingston. "I'll mention it to him tomorrow."

As Caleb's parents thanked Mrs. Livingston and stood to leave, the pictures from his journal flashed in Mrs. Shaw's mind. And she wondered about the chubby little figure he drew so often.

Caleb trudged up the hill from his bus stop, trying not to drop anything. As usual, he carried his soccer ball. But today he also had his Friday papers, a large painting, his lunch box, and his journal. All of this was stuffed into a paper bag Mrs. Livingston had given him, a bag which got heavier each moment.

He wanted to drop everything as he opened his front door, but Caleb knew he wouldn't see his soccer ball for days if he did. Jerald really liked that ball. After hiding it in his room, he carried the bag into the kitchen and dropped it on the table.

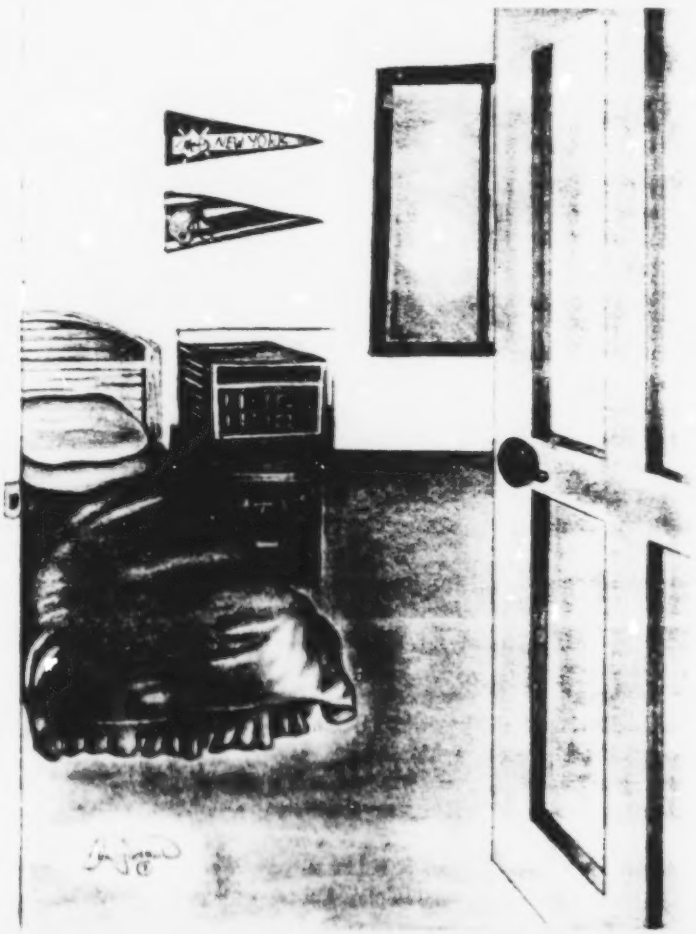
"Hi, Mom," he said. Mrs. Shaw smiled at him and reached for a hug. He noticed again that it was hard to hug his mom. The baby took away her lap more and more.

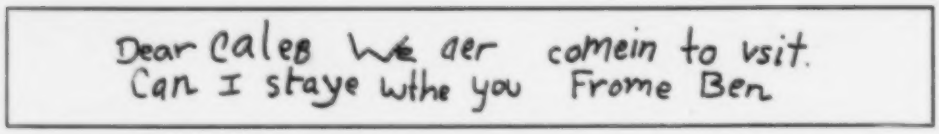
"Oops," said his mom with a laugh. "Guess we'll have to do sideways hugs until the baby is born."

Caleb didn't answer. He didn't know how to tell his mom what he thought of this whole baby thing. The news had been exciting for about a minute, until he'd remembered he had been excited about Jerald.

He picked up a green

Artwork by Don Giberman, a student at Les Bois Junior High School, Boise.





envelope and saw his name on it.

"What's this?" he asked.

"Oh, yes — that came in the mail for you today."

For him? Caleb hardly ever got mail. Who would write to him?

Caleb tore open the envelope, careful not to rip the stamp, which had a Stegosaurus on it. He unfolded the letter and smoothed it out on the table.

His mom smiled. "How nice. Ben sent you a letter."

Caleb smiled too as he looked at the letter. Ben had moved to the coast, so he had drawn a picture of boats on water. At the bottom of the page were some letters that looked just like his own writing, the writing he had torn up and hidden in the trash.

Caleb studied the letter. He found Ben's name at the bottom and ran his finger over the letters: B . . . e . . . n. Up near the boats he saw another familiar word: his name. The rest did not look too much like the writing in books.

"Mom, can you read this?" Caleb pushed Ben's letter over to her.

"Well, let's see. This looks like 'Dear Caleb.' Then I think it says . . ." Slowly Mrs. Shaw pointed to the letters. " 'I like boats.' "

Caleb looked over his mother's shoulder. "Where? Where does it say that?"

Mrs. Shaw answered. "Here's an i, then l.i.k. I th.nk that says like. Here's Bos. Since he drew boats in his picture, I think he means boats. It makes sense. What do you think?"

"Sure, that's right!" Caleb paused and looked at the next letters. Here's another i. Here's mis yu. I miss you! Let's read it all!"

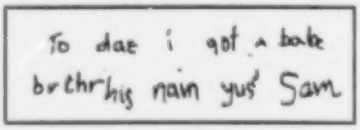
Together he and his mother read: "Dear Caleb, I like boats. I miss you. From Ben."

"Mom, will you help me write a letter back to Ben?" Caleb's blue eyes danced as he grinned at his mom.

Heavy heat from the late spring sun poured over Caleb as he ran up the dirt path, his backpack plopping against his shoulder blades. He could hardly believe that school was out and that he was headed for the hills again. The smell of sagebrush and damp earth filled his head. When he reached the scraggly tree across from the lizard place he had found last summer, he stopped to rest. From his backpack, he dug out an apple and a water bottle. He pulled out his favorite book and opened it.

On the first page was an angry-looking lizard. Then more and more pictures — of his camping trip, the trout he had caught, his house. On every page, there was a little picture of his mom, with her growing tummy. He remembered that when he had told her who they were, she had gotten tears in her eyes. Happy tears, she had called them.

Then came his favorite page in his favorite book. It was the first page with writing.



He remembered all the questions the class had asked after he had shared that page, and the remembering made him feel important.

He read the rest of his book, coming finally to a pocket on the back cover. From this pocket he took a handful of letters. They were all from Ben. Caleb flipped through them, looking for the best letter of all. Finally, he found it.

A sudden noise in front of Caleb made him jump, and his heart pounded. Then he relaxed and slumped back against the tree, smiling. "Hi!" he said softly.

Looking straight at Caleb was his lizard. It had paused on its journey through the dry grass. Its mouth was open slightly and its tongue flicked gently, smelling the air. To Caleb, it seemed the lizard was smiling.

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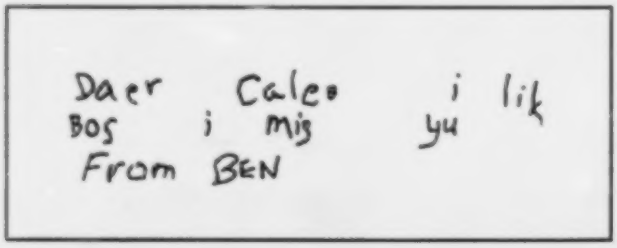
Anne Desaulniers is a fourth grade teacher in the Boise Public Schools.



Article

LITERATURE THAT STIRS THE DUST AND STIRS THE SOUL

by Stan Steiner &
Pat Ware

Why Literature in the Social Studies Class

Finely ground old trail dust settles now in this sesquicentennial year of the Oregon Trail, but it swept up memories of times past in the hearts and minds of the fortunate few who took the opportunity to witness the re-enactment. For others, reading brings alive the historical significance of the long arduous journey from Independence, Missouri to Oregon City, Oregon. The imagination is further stirred by vacationing families who take their interest to the Old West, and compassionate teachers who share in the enthusiasm by revisiting the two thousand mile trek through literature, discussion, field trips, and dramatization.

All too often, we classroom teachers rely on public historical celebrations to prompt us to extend our lessons beyond the textbook handling of an historical event. Unfortunately, such celebrations happen only once in a great while and when they are over the barrage of corresponding materials get put on the shelf, and lessons in subsequent years fall prey to a limited narrative from the textbook or a brief mention in a course of study. Any in-depth inquiry into issues and events surrounding the historical phenomenon are brushed off by excuses such as district curriculum mandates and time. When a public historical event is not available, we typically let the textbook control the amount of information supplied for an event.

This sketchy handling of history in the schools has some deleterious effects. Although teachers are able to "cover" vast time periods in a semester or year, students are given a cursory look at the past. Long term internalization of information is left to the students on their own. Secondly, historical myths are further embedded. Fact and fiction become indistinguishable for teacher and student. Finally, in-depth inquiry, critical thinking, and problem solving receive lip service only, and an opportunity to apply these through historical perspective is lost. Students and teachers are deprived of the lasting benefits of an emotional connection to past times and peoples.

By contrast, there are teachers who have developed a passion for teaching social studies. For these teachers, it would be impossible to experience history without the help of a rich supply of related literature to provide interest and excitement. Textbooks are used as good reference and supplemental sources. Such teachers also wish to entice students to go beyond a perfunctory glossing of an event in history to find the deeper meaning and relation to current life it deserves. It is the intent of this article to follow the passion of these enlightened teachers and to perpetuate the spirit that presently exists toward the sesquicentennial celebration of the Oregon Trail by providing a list of literature sources that enrich and extend student understanding. Through the presentation of tradebook suggestions and additional sources we hope to fuel personal reflection and brainstorming toward the merits of a literature rich classroom.

Sampling the Benefits of Literature Beyond a Textbook

By sharing and discussing the collective information gained from extending the classroom reading, participants recognize the value of literature beyond the textbook. This section of the article will provide examples of additional sources used to

give an in-depth look at history. Although the synthesis in this article is focused on the Oregon Trail, the application could be generalized to any historical event.

The Civil War period and the subsequent movement west across the Oregon Trail are two events in past United States history that have been blessed with a multitude of first person accounts through journals, letters, personal papers and diaries collected and preserved over the years. Documents of this nature are almost as authentic as hearing the actual person tell their story. For posterity purposes, discussing the value of such authentic documentation provides good reason to have students interview their ancestors. A valuable resource for teachers that provides ideas on how to collect oral histories is *Like It Was: A Complete Guide to Writing Oral History* by Cynthia Stokes Brown.

By 1869 more than 350,000 emigrants had left their imprints along the Oregon Trail. These people were not the western explorers, cowboys and mountain men often portrayed in movies and glorified fictional accounts, but primarily upper middle class families from eastern cities and farming communities; adventurous souls who knew little about survival in the wilderness (Evancho, 1993). Russel Freedman's *Children of the Wild West* (1983) is an excellent source for copies of authentic photographs depicting people of the Old West complete with historical narrative. Two other sources to consider for detailed drawings of artifacts and wagons used on the Oregon Trail are *The Pioneers* (Gorsline & Gorsline, 1982) and *Tales of the Old West: Wagon Wheels Roll West* (Morris & Morris, 1989). In addition, the artwork of Carl Bodmer, George Caitlin, and Charles Russell offers memorable visual images for learning.

For many westward pilgrims, the lush fauna of the Williamette Valley and the smell of salt air filled their hearts with joy and relief. They had finally arrived to the land of promise and hope. For others, however, the seemingly endless miles of dust churned up by the oxen drawn wagons and challenges of the wilderness proved to be the end of their dreams. In reality, an estimated one out of every seventeen people who travelled on the Oregon Trail never reached their destiny (Freedman, 1983). Contrary to some myths, Indian attacks were not the major cause of death. According to one Idaho historian the figure is estimated at about 400 deaths caused by Indian attacks and some 5,000 to 10,000 caused by accidents and illness (Oakley, 1993). The leading cause of accidental death was falling from wagons and being crushed by the wheels. Death by illness was most often caused by the environmental impact of people and livestock covering the same trail (Freedman, 1983; Madson, 1993; Oakley, 1993). East of the Rockies, outbreaks of cholera caused from stagnated waters polluted by masses of people led to death through dehydration from the effect of diarrhea. On the western side of the Rockies, death occurred from giardia in the streams infested with bloated carcasses of oxen, horses and cattle. "The emigrants, it seems, were neither heroes nor villains, but rather ordinary people who embarked on an extraordinary adventure" (Oakley, 1993, p. 23).

The sense of hardship and adventure of travel on the Oregon Trail can be reclaimed in present classrooms. Several accounts are written through the eyes of children. Young Lucy's encounter with friendly Pawnees while rescuing her fox terrier puppy in Carla Stevens' *Trouble for Lucy* gets her through one scrape while traveling West. King David, a twelve year old in Louise Moeri's *Save Queen of Sheba*, and John Sager in Honore Morrow's *On to Oregon* are forced to care for younger siblings when they are separated from their parents as result of Indian attack and death respectively. Shunned from their Amish community in Pennsylvania and faced with the realities of no medical services, adolescent Meribah Simon and her father encounter a challenging journey west in Katherine Lasky's *Beyond the Divide*.

A fascinating comparative study is possible by having different members of the class read the various accounts of the Sager family and discuss each author's portrayal of characters and points of view. The choices are: *On to Oregon* (Morrow, 1946); *Oregon at Last* (Vander Loeff, 1961); *For Ma and Pa: On the Oregon Trail, 1844* (Hays, 1972), and; *Stout Hearted Seven* (Frazier, 1973). For further analysis, watch the movie *Seven Alone*, also based on the Sager family.

Each factual or fictionalized story of life on the Oregon Trail brings another piece of history to the

By 1869 more than 350,000 emigrants had left their imprints along the Oregon Trail.

classroom. These stories also have much to offer teachers and students if used in an integrated curriculum. Besides the obvious historical implications, geography, economics, and math integration are possible through mapping and calculating distances, estimating and comparing expenses to today's market value, and graphing demographic information. Conducting historical research through actual journals and old newspapers reopens the past to children as they read about families, social events, advertisements, business happenings, and regional and world news as they knew it then.

Science related information can be discovered by students tracing our present understanding of medicine to an age when cures we now take for granted fell prey to the unknown and ignorant. A study of prevailing weather patterns which coincide with the months the emigrants traveled lends itself to understanding of the elements the pioneers faced. Discussing the movement of prairie schooners over prairies, seemingly impassable mountains, and rushing rivers begs for experimentation with principles of physics. Inquiry into the effects of overgrazing and population growth on grasslands, prairies, and forested areas raises similarities to a present day concern for the environment. A discussion on environmental impact could lead to the ethical issues behind encroachment on Native American lands. A comparison of the current destruction of temperate rain forests to the resultant impacts of the Westward movement would bring a current perspective to history.

Every story read and brought to a large or small group discussion in the classroom adds to the overall impact on students' internalization of history. Students are exposed to more literature as each person shares his or her source which increases the likelihood of additional reading. These same books can be used to learn the elements of story. Characterization, story beginning, plot, climax, supporting details, and story endings can all be discussed from an individual student's perspective in a literature study group. When students can choose from a literature list, they adopt an authoritative role in discussions. If students are provided with choices when asked to read, they move closer to feeling in control of their learning.

Now, there are some catches to making this all work in a classroom. First, the school must have easy access to an assortment of literature to support wide reading. Schools can start building their library with one period in history and add more over time. Bookfairs or other fund raisers can be designated toward additional purchase of books. If fund raising becomes a community tradition for the school library, be aware that school district personnel may try to reallocate funds normally reserved for library books. Teachers and parents must stand firm on maintaining library budget line items. Another possibility is to consider spending the money used to buy textbooks on tradebooks.

Second, teachers have to be willing to explore beyond the textbook and allow students to become the experts through reading choices. If you are not ready to completely abandon the text and jump into a literature based classroom, try establishing study groups around multiple copies of four or five pre-selected pieces of literature. The beginning chapters in Jane Hansen's book, *When Writers Read*, has some helpful questions to guide a classroom transition that incorporates more literature.

Third, the classroom environment has to move toward a center for inquiry and exchange of knowledge. If teachers engage students to read beyond the textbook, history comes alive. Students will: become emotionally involved in the spirit of adventure and the imagery of walking for months over dusty trails that provided views of landscapes never encountered before, empathize with the characters' hunger pains just thinking about where the next meal is coming from, feel the fear encountered with sickness and injury when medical attention is not available, hope for reprieve from overexposure to the elements, and face the realities of losing a loved one. Literature provides the emotional involvement needed to keep history living in our imaginations and souls.

For the final section of this article we have provided an annotated list of books to help teachers in their revisiting of the Oregon Trail. It is our hope that teachers take this list as a source to build upon. For more children's literature books, Barbara Chatton's article, "Settling the West," in the July 1992 issue of *Booklinks* is a must! For additional application ideas with literature in social studies see *Literature based Social Studies: Children's Books & Activities to Enrich the K-5 Curriculum* (Laughlin & Kardaleff, 1991) and *Children Re-create History in Their Own Voices* (Five & Rosen, 1985).

Discussing the movement of prairie schooners over prairies, seemingly impassable mountains, and rushing rivers begs for experimentation with principles of physics.

Children's Tradebooks on the Oregon Trail

***Picture Books*:**

Brenner, B. *Wagon Wheels*. Illus. by D. Bolognese. 1984. New York: Harper & Row. This multi-cultural story is an adventure of an Afro-American family's quest for a new home in the west.

Coerr, E. *The Josefina Story Quilt*. Illus. by B. Degan. 1989. New York: Harper Collins. Young Faith's pet chicken Josefina makes herself a useful part of the wagon train. At the end of the journey Faith's quilt tells the story of her journey west.

Gorsline, M. & Gorsline, D. *The Pioneers*. 1982. New York: Random House. Wonderful pictures with lots of detail enhance this story which begins with Native Americans and Mountain Men through the pioneers on the Oregon Trail.

Morris, N. & Morris, T. *Tales of the Old West Wagon: Wheels Roll West*. Illus. by A. Clark. 1989. New York: Marshall Cavensdish. Colorful and explicit pictures accompany this simple story of a family's trek over the Oregon trail. Detailed artifact illustrations are found throughout the text.

Novak, T. *Diary Josh's Journal*. 1989. Baker City, OR: The Paper Shop. In 1845 Josh's family decides to take the Oregon trail west. Keeping a journal of their trip is his responsibility. His entries tell of confronting rain, hail, crossing big rivers, and meeting new friends.

Purdy, C. *Iva Dunnit and The Big Wind*. Illus. Kellogg, S. 1985. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers. The hero of this tall tale is Iva Dunnit, a pioneer mom raising her kids alone. When the huge wind comes, Iva Dunnit saves the day in a very interesting way.

Waddell, M. *Going West*. Illus. by Dupasquier, P., 1983. New York: Harper & Row. Realistic account of the wagon trip west as seen through the eyes of ten year old Kate. Kate is given a diary by her Pa and writes of her adventures.

***Nonfiction*:**

Burns, P. & Hines, R. *To Be A Pioneer*. 1962. Nashville: Abingdon Press. This book includes many details covering the pioneer lifestyle, such as building cabins and furniture, lighting, clothing, schooling, cooking, songs, and more.

Freedman, R. *Children of the Wild West*. 1983. New York: Clarion. Wonderful pictures and realistic text reflecting a child in the west make this a must for school libraries.

Idaho Dept. Of Highways. *Route Of The Oregon Trail In Idaho*. 1967. Idaho State Department Publication. This book offers a detailed map of the cites along the Oregon Trail in Idaho.

Havighurst, W. *The First Book of The Oregon Trail*. 1960. New York: Franklin Watts. The beginning of the Oregon Trail is shown through information about Lewis and Clark, then moves on to mountain men, and finally chronicles the Dawson Wagon Train Trip to Willamette Valley.

Levine, E. *If You Traveled West in A Covered Wagon*. 1986. New York: Scholastic. Written in a question and answer format, this book answers many questions students have about what it was like to travel in a covered wagon. The questions range from, what is a trail guide? to could they send and receive letters?

McCall, E. *Frontiers of America Wagons Over the Mountains*. 1980.Chicago: Children's Press. This book contains information on the Santa Fe Trail, the California Trail, and the Oregon Trail. Details about the first settlers across the Oregon Trail are included.

Montgomery, E. *When Pioneers Pushed West to Oregon*. 1970. Champaign, IL: Garrard. The diaries of James Nesmith and Jesse Applegate supplement this book about the Oregon Emigration Company's trip in 1843. The author also tells what happens to lives of these men as a result of their trip.

Smith, C. (Ed). *Bridging The Continent*. 1992. Brookfield, CT: Millbrook Press. This book reflects short histories of pioneer events and different pioneer trails. Great pictures and a good simple time line of pioneer events are included.

Steber, R. *Oregon Trail*. 1986 . Prineville, OR: Bonanza. The history of the Oregon Trail is told through a series of one page stories about things that happened along the Oregon Trail.

***Fiction*:**

Budd, L. *The Bell of Kamela*. 1960. Skokie, IL: Rand McNally. A young couple with twin girls starts for Oregon from Virginia and Kamela's husband falls ill. It becomes Kamela's job to get their wagon through despite the fact that the rest of the train goes ahead.

Chambers, C. *Wagons West: Off To Oregon*. 1984. Ahwah, NJ: Troll. Jason Stoddard returns from Oregon to get his brother and sister in Virginia. They have been left orphaned and Jason plans to take them to Oregon to live with him. This book is full of factual information about what pioneers brought with them and how they traveled.

Frazier, N. *Stout Hearted Seven*. 1973. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. The story of the Sager children who finished the trek to Oregon after their parents died along the way. The author used original accounts retold by the Sager sisters, Catherine and Matilda along with diaries from other members of the 1844 wagon train to recreate this story.

Gessner, L. *Danny*. 1979. New York: Harvey House. The story of the Morrow family's trip from South Carolina to Oregon. The father converts to Mormonism and takes a second wife. This causes a breakup of the family. Then the children are kidnapped by an Indian and this story tells of their break from the Indian village and subsequent reunion with their mother.

Graham, V. *Treasure In The Covered Wagon: A Story Of The Oregon Trail*. 1952. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott. The great-grandfather of the author is the basis for this book. He emigrated to Oregon in 1845 with his family including a sister who brought along a melodeon.

Harvey, B. *Cassie's Journey: Going West In the 1860s*. 1988. New York: Holiday House. Eight year old Cassie's trip to Oregon is written in journal form. She tells about the children's chores and everyday occurrences on the trail. The author based her story on true accounts. Similar format to *Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey* by Lillian Schlissel.

Hays, W. *For Ma And Pa: On The Oregon Trail, 1844.* 1972. Putnam, NY: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc. Another version of the Sager children's trip to Oregon. This book is written with a simpler text.

Hooks, W. *Pioneer Cat.* 1988. New York: Random House. When a young girl smuggles a cat aboard the departing wagon train in Missouri it turns out to be an adventure for all.

Lampman, E. *Tree Wagon.* 1953. New York: Doubleday. Based on the Henderson Luelling family trek to Oregon.

Lampman, E. *Wheels West: The Story of Tabitha Brown.* 1965. New York: Doubleday. The story of the Brown family pioneering a trail to Oregon. Grandma Brown helps them through their adventure.

Lasky, K. *Beyond The Divide.* 1983. New York: Macmillan. Meribah and her father Will Simons are shunned from their Amish community and join a wagon train west in 1849. Meribah's description of the people on the wagon train reflects the diversity of people who traveled west.

Laurguard, R. *Patty Reed's Doll.* 1984. Sacramento, CA: Tomato Enterprises Edition. Eight year old Patty Reed was one of the survivors of the Donner Party. This story is told through the eyes of Patty's wooden doll.

Levitin, S. *The No-Return Trail.* 1978. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. In 1841 Nancy Kelsey was one of the first white women to make the trek along the Oregon Trail from Sapling Grove, Kentucky to California. This book is based on her true story of how she, her husband and baby traveled with about seventy other people.

Moeri, L. *Save Queen of Sheba.* 1981. New York: E. P. Dutton. An unexpected separation from their parents puts King David, a twelve year old boy, in an often resentful position of caring for his younger sister, Queen of Sheba.

Morrow, H. *On To Oregon.* 1946. New York: William Morrow & Co. This version of the Sager family saga is told from teenager John Sager's point of view. His struggle with the compassion he has toward his siblings is presented in this story.

Murrow, L. *West Against The Wind.* 1987. New York: Holiday House. Fourteen year old Abby Parker, her mother, brother, aunt, and uncle are determined to make it from Independence, Missouri along the Oregon Trail to California. They begin with high hopes and enthusiasm and end with tragedy and realities of starvation.

Nolan, C. *Journey West On The Oregon Trail.* 1993. Portland, OR: Rain Dance. This is the story of how two families adapt to the conditions on the Oregon Trail. One family has female offspring and the other male.

St.George, J. *The Halo Wind.* 1978. New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons. The Thatcher family agrees to take an Indian girl to Oregon so she can get a Christian education. The Indian girl's anger with the white family becomes as much of a problem as when Pa Thatcher decides to take a short cut.

Stevens, C. *Trouble For Lucy.* 1979. New York: Clarion. Each chapter begins with a quote from a diary or letter written by pioneers. This story is about young Lucy and her little dog, Finn, who both manage to find their share of trouble.

Vander Loeff, R. A. *Oregon At Last.* 1961. New York: William Morrow. A Dutch version of the Sager family story.

Yates, E. *Carolina's Courage.* 1989. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press. The fact that the Putnams traveled along the Oregon Trail alone, not part of a wagon train, makes this story unique. Carolina's courage is tested when she meets an Indian girl who wants to trade dolls with her.

Poetry:

The following selections, often found in various sources, are presented by title and author.

Western Wagons by Rosemary and Stephen Benet
Buffalo Dusk by Carl Sandburg
Pioneer Trails by Betty Warner
A Nation's Builders by Ralph Waldo Emerson
Pioneer Mothers by Ella Brooks Bolkcom
Go West, Young Man, Go West by Frances Wooley

Miscellaneous:

Stickney, J. *Native Americans along the Oregon Trail.* 1993. Husum,WA: Canyon Creations. (Coloring Book) Each page has a diary or letter quote from pioneers about the Indians.

Wesley, John. *Pioneers.* 1974. Lakeside, CA: Interact Co. A simulation of decision-making on a wagon train.

Get the updated, color, computer version of the Oregon Trail available through the Minnesota Educational Curriculum Consortium (MECC).

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Next Issue:

Your Article

Ask Firman

Read-To-Me

Book Reviews

Letters to the Editors

Autumn Evergreen

by Susan Hodgi

As autumn prepares my soul for winter's magic,
I stare outside my window
at the evergreen that has captured my free thoughts.
Like a trimmed Christmas tree, she stands tall at the corner of my house,
gathering small-golden birch leaves
like a spider's web.
Trapped within her boughs, the fallen leaves display
wind-set uniformity.
Going nowhere now, they remain fixed—
until the season batters their form and they're set
free
to be replaced by snow

Article

A Reading and Writing Approach to Science

by Nancy DeLacy

What do dinosaurs, potting soil, and paleontology have to do with a reading and writing curriculum? Actually, they combine very well into a project your students will never forget.

A need for a change:

Two years ago, I decided to become a "hands-on" science teacher. My goal was to have the students do science experiments, in pairs or groups, at their desks. The objective was to get students involved in the science process so that their attitude toward science was one of enthusiasm. Being a 6th grade teacher, I was finding that many of my students thought science was *too hard* or *boring*. I also found that many of the girls were not considering science as a field they could pursue in the future. They felt that they were not *smart* enough, or they just were not interested. That's when I began developing my hands-on science curriculum. I wanted the students that I taught to think: *Science is fun!* and *I can understand science!*

I began by signing up for courses that emphasized hands-on experiments which related to the course outline for 6th grade science. Then I made a goal of doing one hands on experiment per week. The selection of the experiment depended on the unit we were currently studying. That's when I began learning how to combine my reading and writing objectives with my science experiments.

Science can enhance your reading and writing curriculum:

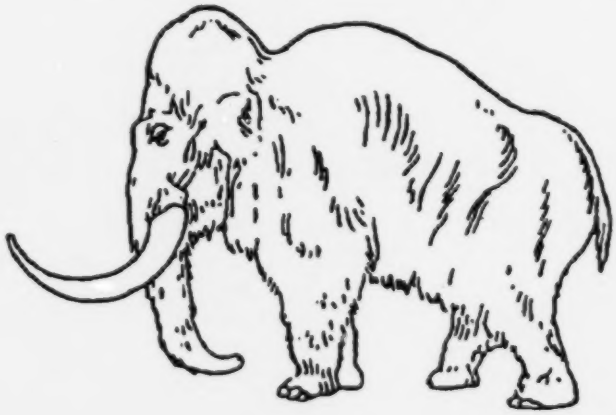
Many teachers I have spoken with have said, "I just don't have time to fit science into my daily curriculum." It is true that teachers are fighting for time to teach all the subjects. Reading, writing, spelling, and math are the skeleton of daily teaching, even at sixth grade. So, for many teachers, if there is time left over for social studies and science, great! If not, well at least the important subjects have been covered. What I have found while teaching hands-on science experiments is that reading and writing skills are used extensively. By teaching a cross-curricular science unit, a teacher can use the enthusiasm generated by the science experiment to motivate the students to read and write. And this is where the dinosaurs fit in.

The dinosaur, the paleontologist, reading, and writing:

With all of the excitement from the movie *Jurassic Park*, I knew that sometime during this school year, I had to do a science unit that included dinosaurs. The experiment for this unit appeared when I attended a GEMS workshop at Boise State University. The experiment was to bury fossils within boxes of soil and sand, and then have the students (the paleontologists) uncover them. I began to think about ways that I could incorporate skills from science, math, reading, writing, and social studies into an overall theme of an paleontology dig. The result was a unit that my students truly enjoyed.

First, with funds provided by the school district's science department, I ordered wooden dinosaur kits. Then, I had parent volunteers come to my classroom and help me assemble fossil boxes. Using cardboard boxes, we layered dirt, student made fossils, and dinosaur bones. Finally, we put a cross section of string across the top of each box to form four quadrants. Once the boxes were assembled, I was ready to introduce the unit to my class. I told them that they were going to be paleontologists and then gave them the project requirements, which were in a typed packet.

During the project, each team of five to six students would excavate for prehistoric fossils. They were to: draw and label a map of the paleontological dig (social studies and language arts skills); record, sort, and preserve any fossils found (math, science, and language arts skills); write journal entries of their daily activities

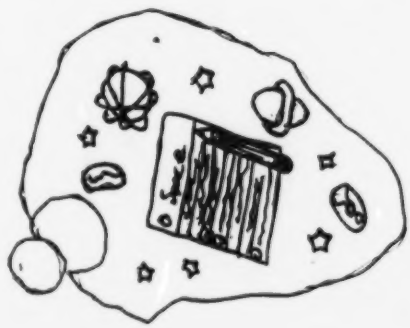


(language arts skills); and construct their find (math, reading, and science skills). Each student was instructed on how to construct a quadrant map, given an fossil sheet on which to record the fossils, and given their own paleontology journal in which to write their daily activities. The activity took a regular 45 minute period, and the students completed the entire dig in three days. But, it was the results that were so exciting.

Hearing and reading the results.

As I walked around the room watching the paleontology teams digging through the soil in their boxes, I heard comments like: "*Wow, I think that is the fossil that I made*"or "*Look at the teeth on that skeleton, it must be a carnivore.*" The enthusiasm in the classroom for learning was electrifying. Then when the dig was completed, I had a chance to sit down and enjoy looking at their completed projects. The maps were wonderful, the fossil sheets were descriptive and complete, but it was the journals that took my breath away. Let me share with you just a few entries:

Artwork:
by Sara Spink who is age nine and in the fourth grade, in Boise, ID.



DAY ONE

Today we uncovered 11 bones and three shells. We were digging on level three when time ran out. Tomorrow we hope to finish removing three remaining fossils on level 3 and dig up the fourth level. Some better tools would speed it up, but we are on a tight budget.

and from another journal:

DAY TWO

Today was the last day of our dig. It was a very sucessful day. The day's biggest find was the spine of our fossil. The spine went into all four of our quadrants. Tomorrow we are going to start putting our dinosaur together. I wonder what our dinosaur will be like? The spine was curved, so it is probably a Triceratops. Altogether, we found four shells and 17 bones.

and finally, a third sample:

DAY THREE

Today we assembled the dinosaur. It was a Tyrannosaurus Rex. It was fun and hard to build it. At first we couldn't get the legs on right. But we got it eventually. It was an exciting experience.

The extra effort it has taken to set up science experiments has always reaped huge student rewards. Parents have commented to me that their sixth grader loves science. And, I have been able to combine my other teaching objectives into science units that have made reading and writing relevant to the students.

Paleontology Journal

Each day, you will record your activities from that day's paleontology dig. Your journal entries will represent your daily activities. All journal entries must be written neatly, in complete sentences, using proper grammar. An example of a journal entry might be

DAY ONE

Today my team began an excavation of our area. As we began to dig, we found a fossil in area A1. It appears to be a fossil of a trilobite. It was a very exciting find.

Remember that your journal is worth 40 points. It will be handed in on the fifth day of this project.

Mapping Your Paleontology Dig

As a paleontologist, it is important for you to record as precisely as possible all fossils on your site. Therefore, you have been given a four layer map to draw. Follow the steps below for successful mapping.

1. Fold your map into fourths.
2. Use your ruler to draw lines on the creases you have made.
3. Label each area as A1, A2, B1, B2.
4. When your team finds a fossil, draw it in its correct area BEFORE you remove it from the site. Draw it exactly as you see it.
5. Remove the fossil from your site, place it in your preservation box, and record it on the fossil list.

There are four levels to your excavation site. After you have mapped all fossils found on the first level, turn to the next level of your map, and continue digging and recording. Your completed map is worth 30 points and is due the fifth day of the project.

Fossils

Specimen	Area

Artwork by Steven Morrison, age 11, who is in the fifth grade at Frontier Elementary, Meridian, ID.

Paleontology Dig

During this project, you and your team will be paleontologists. Your goal will be to excavate for prehistoric fossils. During this project, you will be required to:

1. Draw and label a map of the paleontology dig.
2. Record, sort, and preserve any fossils found.
3. Write journal entries of your daily activities.
4. Construct your find.

It is your team's responsibility to keep your work area clean and organized. Your team will receive daily points for: ability to cooperate, staying on task, organization of project area, progress on the project, and team effort. Points will range from 10 to 1, 10 representing the highest achievement on all areas listed above.

PROJECT EVALUATION:
You will be graded on the following:

1. Total team points	40 points
2. Completed fossil map	30 points
3. Fossil sheet	20 points
4. Completed fossil construction	20 points
5. Complete and concise journal	40 points
Total points possible	150 points

Your team will have a maximum of four days to complete this project. All project requirements will be due on the fifth day. All late projects will receive 10 points less for each day the project is late. All journal entries will be completed outside of regular class time.

About the author:
Nancy DeLacy is a 6th grade teacher in the Boise Public Schools.

Paleontology

Journal

NAME _____

DAY ONE

DAY TWO

DAY THREE

DAY FOUR

Article

Interview with Don Holdaway

by Tim Morrison

Author of two of the earliest explorations of Whole Language teaching, Independence in Reading *and* The Foundations of Literacy, *Don Holdaway has contributed to the enjoyment of language learning by teachers and children for over thirty years. He pioneered the strategies of shared reading in New Zealand schools during the late 1960s and early 1970s, publishing the first "big books" in the Read-It-Again program for Scholastic in 1972. As an early pioneer in the Whole Language movement, Don Holdaway is in a position to evaluate the issues and trends of literacy learning worldwide.*

Don Holdaway was a featured speaker at the First Annual Literacy Education Conference held in Boise, Idaho, in August of 1990. As coordinator for that conference, I had the pleasure of serving as his host. On the Sunday before the conference began, he graciously accepted my invitation to come to my home for dinner. He brought with him several books and with our three boys (ages 10, 8 and 2) at his knee, he read them books that held their interest. Later that evening, our youngest whispered in my wife's ear, pointing to Don, "That man likes me!" Don Holdaway is a not only a noted authority on language learning, but he is also one who speaks to children. Here are some of his thoughts on the Whole Language movement.

Morrison: *What do you see as fundamental principles of Whole Language?*

Holdaway: I think it's a pity in a way that the terminology has so quickly become fixed on Whole Language. Certainly, as the movement began in my country 15 years ago that was not the terminology used. Wholeness was always a very important part, but many of us prefer vocabulary using process and strategy as the big change instead of aiming at product. What we're concerned with is not the product outcome, but the whole process of learning that occurs while products are being produced.

A way of approaching this conceptually is through natural development. That has always been a difficult concept for Americans. Piaget, for instance, has not been well understood here. He thinks of developmental learning as involving tiny changes over long periods of time. The American point of view to this sort of research has always been, find out where the kids are, light a fire under them, and push them into the next stage of development. This is a complete misconception of what developmental learning is. What we're concerned with is to enrich and deepen and make more efficient every stage of development.

We are always concerned with change over time and with the processes of the flow of information. These are dynamic processes which are too often destroyed by the processes of analysis. The types of research that have supported Whole Language allow us to retain the richness and diversity and dynamism of data. So we owe the insights that underpin our notions of Whole Language or process teaching to scientific disciplines such as anthropology and ethnography which take a longitudinal, time-oriented view of the data. This is a much more adequate way of looking at the knowledge instead of cutting data into static time bits, which is what happens in the physical sciences. We are finding the patterns, the processes crucial to that data we are studying. Certainly, Whole Language ought to express all of those things if it is properly understood.

Morrison: *What differences do you see between the ways Whole Language principles are realized in Australia and New Zealand compared with in the United States?*

Holdaway: One of the first differences I've noticed is the attitude toward professionalism in Australia. In the United States this is a grassroots movement, driven by a profession of practitioners who are finding new insights to problems that are relevant to them. It is not a hierarchical movement; it has not been phased from the top down. It is not one driven by abstract, let alone political ideas, which is the case in New Zealand. What is very difficult for American teachers is the notion of being in control of their own profession. In that sense, I suppose, the way the Whole Language movement is developing in this country is that it is bringing into schools a new professionalism at the grassroots level. Teachers are thinking of themselves as professionals, taking full responsibility for their actions, rather than working from a rule book and saying, I have to do this because it says right here I have to do it. This is the central core in Whole Language strategies and it requires teachers to be much more disciplined professionals moment-by-

moment. Making decisions about the profession on the classroom floor, second-by-second in relationship to the context of that which is occurring, and the relationship to the clients whose attention is in focus at that moment. There is nothing in the teachers' guides which can guide teachers. Teachers can only be guided by being capable of making professional judgments while they are on their feet. So really it is a question of professional growth. In this respect, the teachers in Australia and New Zealand have made this move a little earlier -- not entirely without difficulty. We had great difficulties in the beginning as well. The teachers had to grow, and learn, and that's one of the exciting things about the whole movement; it entails this growing self-confidence and acute professional knowledge on the part of practitioners.

Morrison: *Teachers in the United States sometimes indicate a reluctance to involve themselves in Whole Language teaching due to their desire to teach phonics and their perception that Whole Language advocates discourage work with the parts of language. How would you respond to such teachers? How does phonics fit into a Whole Language perspective of instruction?*

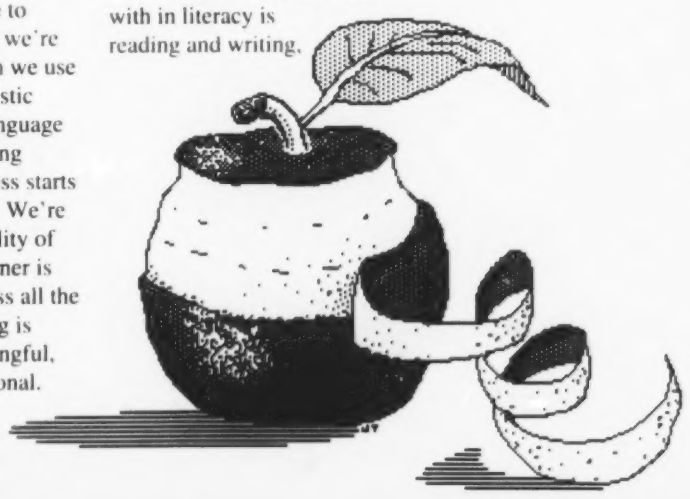
Holdaway: The way children learn to speak their language in the home is obviously a highly effective form of human learning. In the past we have been terribly arrogant by taking this as passe -- it is just too simple for us to look at. And yet we have never approached the efficiency of that situation in the schools in teaching reading and writing. The notion of accepting a 25% failure rate, which is what we (in New Zealand and Australia) were facing 30 years ago (and I'm afraid which is very much being faced today in the United States) as far as functional literacy is concerned, would never be tolerated in terms of learning ordinary language in the home!

Now, when we look at children as they learn to talk, we see them moving from the whole to the part. And in their own way, they can make that transfer because the whole is always present and makes whatever they are doing intelligible and functional. If they have any doubts or confusion, all they have to do is open their eyes and ears to what's going on around them. The learning is taking place in a whole and functional environment. But this does not stop them from being very focused and precise about mastering the detail. And the detail of speaking is much more difficult and abstract than the detail of learning to read and write. The child has to learn to distinguish every phoneme in the language with tremendous accuracy. And all of this by the time a child is 3 or 4.

It is not a mistake to study the parts. What we're concerned about when we use the term whole in holistic learning or Whole Language is process; we're talking about where the process starts and where it finishes. We're talking about availability of information. The learner is immersed in wholeness all the time so that everything is intelligible and meaningful, purposeful and functional. This makes for efficiency in mastering detail. The thing which makes detail meaningful and memorable and which reduces the confusion of things which are very similar is being immersed in a context where you can find additional information from the whole that will relieve your confusion and anxiety. We can't learn and remember what comes to us in fear and anxiety. We remember what comes to us with that spark of insight, that spark of understanding, that spark of "Ah, now I've got it!" When we say, "Ah, I've got it now," we mean, "There is detail I've never understood before and I'm understanding it now because it's tied to the whole." This is the way that the human brain works, this is what the human brain finds easy to do.

Complex human learning, particularly linguistic learning, is deeply characterized by approximation.

What we're concerned with in literacy is reading and writing.



just as in oracy we're concerned with speaking and listening -- both together, both as part of each other, both in many ways the same process. Research of the 1950s and 60s was research almost entirely given over to reading, and because it only provided half the picture, it was bound to be deeply misinformed and wrong about nearly every issue. You can't find out about literacy by looking only at reading. You must look at reading and writing and their relationships, and their functions within the real world. You spend 20 times more time teaching phonics here (in the United States) than in many countries. It hasn't worked at all! The real solutions to the problems about how children come to grips with graphophonic relationships of language have only become apparent as the research has been rectified and we have taken writing into the context of the research. Now we see that children master the relationships of letters and sounds in the same way they master other things, by moving from the known to the unknown. Children start with spoken language, which they have already mastered, and they make hypotheses about its relationships to the new visual symbols. We've seen from the writing research that the way children successfully come to grips with graphophonics is through study that starts with the sound system and its relationships to the graphic system. So we're working from sounds to letters.

Morrison: *Many teachers and some parents are becoming acquainted with Invented (Temporary, Approximate) Spelling. A concern many have deals with when conventional spelling should be expected of students and who (teachers at which grades) should have responsibility of ensuring students' ability to spell accurately. What is the place of spelling in Whole Language?*

Holdaway: In these matters where you've got problematic situations and you're wondering what is the appropriate attitude to take, the guideline I've always followed is to go back to the primary models of acquisition learning which give us very clear guides.

The process of learning to speak is very clearly a process of approximation-tiny approximations that over a course of day-by-day lead to improvement in the speech of children. A baby says, "Daaaa, daaaa, daaaa." We pick him up and say "Daddy." Of course, he's not saying Daddy, but we are not lying to him or telling him he's wrong or any of those terrible things. In actual fact, the way we see that as a parent is, "His speech has started! He's going to be a talker!" A lot of conversation about the process of children learning to talk is concerned with the approximations they make. I remember one of my kids trying to say windscreen wiper for the first time when he was about three or three-and-a-half. He used to say, "frumfry." This went through about 6 or 7 permutations until he was six-and-a-half, when he was finally able to say windscreen wiper. This was a delight to the family. He was never criticized; he was never told he was wrong. Nobody acted as if what he had said was unintelligible or criminal, as happens when people look at childrens' spelling. It's a difference of attitude towards approximation.

Complex human learning, particularly linguistic learning, is deeply characterized by approximation. You don't have a task to learn and get it right the first time and then put it away and learn something new. That's the way we've tended to teach vocabulary in the past, and it just doesn't work like that. It works by small increments of skill, day-by-day, week-by-week, etc. It's a matter of keeping tabs on that to know whether the process is going on in a healthy and satisfactory way or not, and at what speed it's going. You can't count the correct responses, because there aren't correct responses; there are approximations. That doesn't worry us as far as speech is concerned. Why should it worry us as far as literacy is concerned? The important thing is that we look at learning as taking place in small increments over long periods of time as happens when learning to speak. We take the same attitude toward literacy; it will be a three or four year process in the movement toward traditional spelling, provided our longitudinal records inform us of the rate and quantity of learning.

One thing that is sort of sticking in the back of my consciousness is the way you put this question -- it is a question of responsibility. This is very critical to the Whole Language movement, and something that's pretty deeply misunderstood; one of the things that's most difficult to get across at the public level. All the evidence tells us that from the beginning, students are successful when they take responsibility for their own learning. Developmental learning is a matter of hundreds of steps through error towards final accomplishment. Human learners operate in that way, looking at their errors, not as negative points of failure, but in terms of what they were able to do yesterday or the day before or last week as points of success. Efficient learners take responsibility, in the main, for their own learning. The sooner we teach learners to be responsible for themselves the better.

Morrison: *Accountability concerns sometimes discourage teachers and administrators from being*

All the evidence tells us that from the beginning, students are successful when they take responsibility for their own learning.

involved in the Whole Language movement. How can teachers and administrators assure the public that students are progressing without using external measures such as standardized tests?

Holdaway: There is a certain distinction I'd like to make at the beginning. There is a certain store of information that is appropriate for administrators and school systems and countries and so on to have which is statistical in nature, which shows tendencies, whether the standards are rising or falling, etc. This is statistical and demographic information about populations. That's what standardized tests ought to be about. That information is not only inappropriate to guide learning or teaching, it will always misinform us. At the individual level, if we try to take the results of a statistical test and say how this particular child performed on that test and we try to make educational judgments on that, we are deeply wrong about what we are doing. Because the product nature of that sort of information is statistical and has nothing to do with individuals, it will not only not be helpful, it will inevitably misinform us. Kids are not statistics, and they should not be treated as statistics. This comes about because tests of this kind by their very nature tend to emphasize deficits. They compare populations at one point in time. Whole Language is not about what happens in one point in time, it must be about two points in time at least, if not many more.

What information is reliable for guiding learning, teaching, and parents? It is information about individuals which deals with learning. It is concerned with change, with approximation -- with changes in performance over time. Any information, to be valuable, must compare, not one child with another, but a child's performance now with the same child's performance at some other time, or preferably, several other points in time. If we were responsible in any way, we would be able to give instances of what sort of learning, what sort of processes, pupils were able to do in every week of their career from the beginning of elementary school. That has never occurred. No school system has ever been honest to its pupils in terms of evaluation. Evaluation is a continuous record, a continuous knowledge of what happens over the course of time.

What teachers are doing in Whole Language is to gather this information and examples of work from children over time. The important thing is to have dated instances of behavior over time concerning individual children. That's the only thing which will tell at what rate he's learning, whether his learning is satisfactory or not, and, if you want, it will tell you some negative things too -- some things that, perhaps, you would have expected him to be able to do which he can't do. Then, you might help him do something about that. But you can only make that judgement on the basis of data which is extended over appropriate periods of time. The only way you can get this is by collecting the data over time, dating and recording it carefully. Ideally, the learner is responsible for being aware of his own approximations and how adequate they are and aware of his own progress and being satisfied or dissatisfied -- whether he's going to have another try today, or whether he should be doing better and persisting. Since he knows that he is better today than yesterday, he's going to tell you, because he's very proud of that and will let you know, there's no doubt about that. Two things come out of that. If you have a system by which you record the children's own reports of their learning, you'll have a very good evaluation system that helps learning and that's infinitely more accurate and precise than standardized tests. This will also assist the whole process of taking responsibility so that the teacher, with the child, has kept a record of examples of written work, and a record of reading.

There are various techniques by which you can record reading. The most

Lookin' at Momma's View

by Susan Hodgin

Momma stands in front of the red-rusted white porcelain sink
watching for her children in the big green yard.
Momma listens for their voices
as she washes white warm sudsy dishes.
Holding her head still to better gaze through the fine black screen,
she looks for them—

Momma now sits still beside an open dining room window
watching the empty autumn yard.
Momma stops
to peel her soup vegetables.
Staring long outside to remember the days when her children were still at play,
she listens for them—

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for children and their mothers.

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effective procedure in this process in New Zealand schools and in the success of Reading Recovery (Dr. Marie Clay's process), is a simple technique by which we record what actually happens when a child reads a real book, and date those records and keep them. In Reading Recovery you have one of these records every day over the course of the 15 weeks that the child is in the program. So you have massive longitudinal information about the child that is very precise and very accurate.

Morrison: *What are your thoughts regarding the future of the Whole Language movement?*

Holdaway: The enthusiasm and excitement that goes along with the working out of a new paradigm and the excited response to new insights which one expects at the point of generation is long past in my own country. We can say that this is not a flash in the pan, this is not a new methodology. It's not that sort of thing at all. The change has been powerful and stable, and hasn't produced a "swing of the pendulum" sort of reaction. It's a mature system now. It's over 10 years since, nationally, the teachers were trained in Whole Language procedures and these procedures are leading to new patterns of research, new patterns of operations and so on. So one can feel confident, I think, that what we're dealing with here is something significantly different from the sorts of swings that we've had in the past. It's not so much a question of opinion as a question of a whole new way of operating both in research and in practice.

About the Author:
Tim Morrison is the coordinator of the Literacy Education Program at Boise State University.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 1994

24-26 15th Western Regional IRA Conference at Reno
Donald Bear
1025 Sumac
Reno, NV 89509
(702) 784-4951

March

1 PORTALS Article Submission Deadline

15 PORTALS Ad Deadlines

May

8-13 Thirty-ninth Annual IRA Convention
Toronto, Canada

June

11 Leadership Planning
Boise, ID
Lynne Ball, President
Leadership Planning Committee

Feature

PRACTICING TEACHERS: THE PILLARS OF PORTALS

Susan M. Chevalier, coeditor

Every journal, magazine, or newspaper has regular features. If you are like many readers, you tend to turn to those features before reading any of the articles. In a widely read magazine like *Reader's Digest*, you might first read "Life in These United States" or "Humor in Uniform" before reading the articles. In the past the *Idaho Reading Report* and *Hi Hopes* had regular features, some of which are listed below. It has been customary for a council or council members around the state to serve as editor for those features.

PORTALS needs to carry on, as well as establish tradition. We would like to invite each of you, practicing teachers, to share your thoughts about the regular features that will occur in each issue. Which features do you want to see carried on from *Hi Hopes* and the *Idaho Reading Report?* What new features should be added?

It might be that all of the features from the previous journals become a part of PORTALS. The co-editors will serve as the collection agent for your ideas, poetry, stories, art, news from councils, announcements and other material for featured sections. After we receive this information from you the reader, it will be sorted and sent to the editors listed below.

In the future, we hope to conclude this process approximately one month before the publication date. This was nearly impossible with this issue as we have been establishing our "job description." We were expecting material to be sent to us from the editors across the state. Shortly before publication date we learned that we were to collect material and send it to the field editors for their selection. In fact, we are not sure all of the editors from the councils were contacted. If we were to reach you and didn't, we apologize. Just drop a note and tell us how to contact you for the next issue. PORTALS will only be successful with our collective wisdom.

One feature that we hope to continue is that of poetry. After a lengthy discussion, the co-editors decided we would like to emphasize poetry with a literacy theme or poetry written by teachers. Poetry received by the co-editors will be forwarded to the poetry editor. The poetry editor selects material for publication and returns it to the co-editors. We then attempt to publish all the material suggested within the limitations of the page number allowance.

It is the desire of the Idaho Council of the International Reading Council and the coeditors to emphasize the writing of practicing teachers. We have found teachers currently in the field to be great resources. Nancy DeLacy contributed an article for this publication. She is a practicing teacher with excellent ideas. We would like to hear about your successes in the classroom as well.

We are challenging you to help build the success of PORTALS. Please share your accomplishments, ideas, questions and news with us. Send them to us so we have material to share with the editors around the state who will prepare your material for publication. We look forward to hearing from you, the pillars of PORTALS.

Write to us in care of:

PORTALS, Co-editors
Boise State University
1910 University Drive
Boise, Idaho 83725
Fax: 208-385-4365

If possible, send your material on disk and let us know the word-processing program used.

PORTAL Features
Field Editor by Council

Book Reviews	ICIRA
Summary of Special Council Programs	ICIRA
Honors Council Requirements	Boise
Ask Firman	East Idaho
Content Area Reading	Heartland
Opportunities for Integration	Heartland
Practical Classroom Hints	Horizons
Information About Upcoming Conferences	Mini-Cassia
Read-To-Me	Oregon Trail
Council Activities That Tickle Your Gizzard	Panhandle
Art for Publication	Snake River Valley
Interviews With Authors	Southeast Idaho
Poetry	Tamarack
Letters to the Editors	Coeditors of Portals
Message From the President	ICIRA, President

Book Reviews

by Karen Glennon

Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes, **Chris Crutcher, Greenwillow, ISBN 0-688-11552-7.** For teenagers who feel being a teen are not "the best years of your life," Chris Crutcher's books are a therapeutic read. Sarah Byrnes and Eric Calhoune have gut wrenching problems which they have survived together through friendship, intelligence, and the catharsis of a wicked sense of humor. A powerful and important book, *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes* shares Crutcher's usual irreverence for flawed adult authority, and deals with tough topics honestly.

The Boggart, **Susan Cooper, Margaret K. McElderberry Books, ISBN 0-689-50576-0.** *The Boggart* is an ancient Scottish trickster spirit. He has lived in his castle with generations of castle owners.

The castle is inherited by a Canadian family distantly related to the owner who knew nothing of the Boggart and his trickster ways. Unable to keep the drafty castle, the family puts it up for sale. While packing up some of the furnishings as mementos to take back with them to Canada they inadvertently pack up the Boggart as well.

The fun begins when the Boggart is set loose in a world of 20th Century technology!

Talking to Dragons: Book Four of the Enchanted Forest Chronicles, **Patricia C. Wrede, Harcourt Brace & Co, ISBN 0-152-84247-0.** Daystar has no idea who his mother is or his father's identity. It has been important to all involved to keep him ignorant of his background. But after Daystar's sixteenth birthday everything changes. Wrede's funny fantasy series for the middle grades comes to a nice satisfying conclusion with a moral. Students will love it.

Dragon's Gate, **Laurence Yep, Harper Collins, ISBN 0-060-22971-3.** Starting in 1865 huge numbers of Chinese were hired to build the U.S. transcontinental railway. Tons of bones from Chinese laborers were shipped back to China for burial. No one knows how many bodies were never found.

Yep's book is a grim look at past U.S. history in spite of themes of love and hope included in the novel. This book is an excellent multicultural read for young adults.

Jim Thorpe: 20th Century Jock, **Robert Lipsyte, Harper Collins, ISBN 0-060-22988-8.** Jim Thorpe, the greatest all-around male athlete in American history was Native American. His history was summed up by Chief Lyons, "Jim Thorpe was beaten, but he was never tamed. He was too strong an individual for that. He suffered, but he survived. . ."

This is an excellent biography, very well written and thought provoking.

Nightjohn, **Gary Paulsen, Delacorte, ISBN 0-385-30838-8.** Nightjohn, an escaped slave, comes back to teach others to read and write because, "It has to be written." Sarny, his 12 year old student, receives hope for change and a chance at more through Nightjohn's efforts. He sacrifices greatly so the truth behind his people's stories of slavery will survive.

Readers will think about this book long after they are finished. It is short and powerful enough for a chapter read aloud for middle through high school.

My Name is Maria Isabel, **Alma Flor Ada: Illustrations by Dyble Thompson, Macmillan, ISBN 0-689-31517-1.** This is a warm story about identity and acceptance. This book would go well in a unit in which students research their own names and heritage. Maria Isabel Salazar Lopez has moved to the United States from Puerto Rico. Each of her names is in honor of someone she wants to remember. Her new teacher insists that as one of four Marias in her new class that she shorten her name to Mary Lopez. Maria rightly feels cut off from her heritage.

Finding Buck McHenry, **Alfred Slote, Harper Trophy, ISBN PB 0-06-4404692.** Suppose you thought you had discovered a secret about your school janitor? Suppose you thought he was a famous player in the

Negro League before Jackie Robinson became the first Black player in the majors? This is the plot driving this Alfred Stole baseball story. Stole manages to include a lot of historical information pertaining to that period in baseball.

An easy and interesting middle grade read. It also includes a competent female character as part of the team so that the appeal is wider. A 1994 Readers Choice Book.

***Bull Run*, Paul Flieshman, Harper Collins, ISBN 0-06-021446-5.** *Bull Run* is the story of the first battle of the Civil War told from many viewpoints: both North and South, slaves and free, soldier and bystander to history.

This is a small, powerful book which would work well for reader's theatre, or discussion of the Civil War era.

***Daniel's Story*, Carol Matas, Scholastic, ISBN PB 0-059-465880.** This book was published in conjunction with the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. It is a composite of many boys' lives during the Holocaust condensed into one boy named Daniel. Daniel is a photographer and his photographs link him with the Nazi uprising.

This is an excellent factual book to use with the numerous other childhood accounts of the Holocaust.

***A Brush With Magic: Based on a Traditional Chinese Story*, William J. Brooke, Harper Collins Publishers, ISBN 006-022973x.** The moral of this story is that a talent is a gift that must be used well or it will disappear and that magic is in ourselves not in what surrounds us. William Brooke uses an old tale about a magic paintbrush to deal with questions about reality and fantasy, talent and magic and greed and love.

***The Giver*, Lois Lowry, Houghton Mifflin, ISBN 0-395-64566-2.** Jonas inhabits a perfect world of the future. There is no sickness, poverty, war, injustice, divorce, or inequality. Everyone is happy. No one rebels or is angry. No one is ever rude. Everyone has a job for which they are suited.

Jonas is assigned the job of Receiver. It is the most important job in the community. He is to receive memories, feelings and pain so that the rest of the community doesn't have to deal with reality or consequences. As Receiver he begins to learn the dark secrets under his perfect world.

This is a powerful book.

***Rosa Parks: Mother to a Movement*, Rosa Parks, Dial, ISBN 0-803-70673-1.** Rosa Parks (daughter of a teacher) wasn't physically exhausted, "The only tired I was, was tired of giving in." Her determination and simple act of standing up for herself (and her people) changed the world.

On the evening of December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks caught her usual segregated bus home and found a seat in the middle section. When a white man couldn't find a seat, the bus driver ordered Rosa Parks to give up hers. She refused. Her subsequent arrest sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott and was a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement.

***Voices From The Fields: American Migrant Children*, S. Beth Atkin, ISBN 0-316-05633-2.** This book is a collection of essays, poems, photographs and interviews in both Spanish and English. It is sad, beautiful, terrible and powerful in turns. The voices of the migrant children and their parents who for years have been the backbone of growers in many states makes them visible to a world that has to often ignored this segment of our population.

***I Spy Two Eyes: Numbers in Art*, Lucy Micklethwait, Greenwillow, ISBN 0-688-12640-5.** A wide variety of art from the 15th century to the present in a multitude of styles make up this unique picture book. A companion to Micklethwait's *I Spy: An Alphabet in Art.* Each painting gives the child something to look for along with other fascinating details.

***Owen*, Kevin Henkes, Greenwillow, ISBN 0-688-11449-0** *Owen*, like its creator Kevin Henkes, is warm and humorous. Owen has a fuzzy yellow blanket and a nosy elderly neighbor with all the answers. Owen's determination to keep Fuzzy, and his mother and father's final decision to rely on their own loving instincts, help them to come up with "an absolutely wonderful, positively perfect, especially terrific idea. . ." which satisfies them all. . . even nosy Mrs. Tweezers. Engaging art and endpapers make this book a must.

***The Dragons are Singing Tonight*, Jack Prelutsky, Greenwillow, ISBN 0-688-09645-x.** This compendium of dragon poems is fantastically illustrated and gilded by Peter Sis. The unusual borders are particularly wonderful. This is a nice pairing of talents.

***Coyote and the Magic Words*, Phyllis Root, Lothrop Lee and Shepard, ISBN 0-688-10308-1.** This is a fun retelling of an old trickster tale. Sandra Speidel's glowing pastels give the book a warm southwest flavor, but what makes this book special are her illustrations of Coyote. Her Coyote is the epitome of the irrepressible, yet lovable, mischief maker who has wheedled his way into reluctant hearts for centuries.

***Margaret and Margarita; Margarita y Margaret*, by Lynn Reiser, Greenwillow, ISBN 0-688-12239-6** The illustrations in this early bilingual picture book are interesting. Margaret and Margarita speak different languages and come from different worlds but it doesn't take them long to exchange words and ideas. For their mothers the language and culture differences act as a barrier. The children quickly reach a level of friendship which also becomes a bridge between their parents.

***Charles Dickens: the Man Who Had Great Expectations*, Diane Stanley, Morrow Junior Books, ISBN 0-688-09110-5.** This wonderful new picture book biography of Charles Dickens is a great nonfiction addition to your library. It is beautiful, accurate, and easily accessible for young and old alike.

***Demi's Dragons and Fantastic Creatures*, by Demi, Henry Holt, ISBN 0-8050-2564-2.** Glowing illustrations of fantastic creatures are some of the most beautiful creatures by Demi to date. Dragons are the largest group reflected. Some of the wonderful dragons are gilded, others fold out into a three page spread. Exquisite art.

***Now Let Me Fly: The Story of a Slave Family*, Dolores Johnson,**

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Macmillan, ISBN 0-02-747699-5. This is a multigenerational story of one family from Africa and slavery in America. Her childhood friend and husband is sold into slavery. Her oldest son is sold to another farmer and vows to buy his family's freedom. Another offspring is beaten for learning to read and escapes north to freedom. One other son, whose music is taken from him, escapes to live out his life with the Seminoles. The woman and her last child live in slavery until freed at the end of the Civil War. Powerful!

***We'are all in the Dumps with Jack and Guy*, Maurice Sendak, Harper Collins, ISBN 0-06-205014-1.**

Maurice Sendak's new picture book is based on a blending of two old nursery rhymes illustrated in his unique style to focus on a whole new meaning. Unemployment, hunger, homelessness, poverty, child abuse, and AIDS are all part of the "dumps" we are all in together. Sendak suggests an age old cure. Responsibility for each other may get us all a better life.

***Born in the Gravy*, Denys Cazet, Orchard, ISBN 0-531-05488-8.** A Hispanic kindergartner tells her papa about her first day at school. This hilarious multicultural Cazet has all the earmarks of *Never Spit on Your Shoes*, and *Are There Any Questions?* The pictures illustrate what really happened and the juxtaposition of that with the child's viewpoint make these irresistible to any teacher or parent.

***The Enchanted Horse*, Magdalen Nabb, Orchard, ISBN 0-531-06805-6.** A middle reader fantasy in which a young girl finds herself irresistibly drawn to buy an old rocking horse from a blind man's junk shop. The old man tells her a story of a cruel owner who abused his horses and when he finally died his most beautiful horse came up missing. An enchanted Bella, the horse, goes home with the little girl. A book for children who wish for a horse but whose parents have no place to keep one.

***The Ultimate Noah's Ark: Perfect Puzzle for all Ages*, by Mike Wilks, Henry Holt, ISBN 0-8050-2802-1.** This is another puzzle book by the author of *The Ultimate Alphabet*. All the creatures on the Ark came on two by two, male and female. So do the creatures in Wilks book...all except one. Which one is the problem because he does his best to disguise them. Another brain teaser!

About the author:
Karen Glennon teaches in Nampa and works part-time at a bookstore in Boise.

The book review section is open to any submissions for children's literature as well as professional books.

The Basal With A Touch of Oregano

by Sandi English, Peggy Clark, Dorothy Dutton, Carol Mendiola, Shawna Exline.

At the summer ICIRA Leadership conference, four teachers were chatting about the use of basal readers. One teacher was overheard saying, ". . . and I don't like using basals at all." Interjecting into the conversation, another teacher said, "Oh, I use basil all the time with a touch of oregano."

"BASIL
Ocimum Basilicum
Lamiaceae

The French call basil *herbe royale*. In Italy, basil has been and still is a sign of love. According to tradition, when a woman puts a pot of basil on the balcony outside her room, it means that she is ready to receive her suitor.

Basil hasn't always been associated with romance and fine dining. In fact, there was a time when people feared this herb.

Men and women certainly love basil today. At home, it has become one of the most popular herbs in the garden and in their kitchen, but there exists a host of other possibilities for it.

Medicinal: Given that basil is a member of the mint family, it isn't surprising that, medicinally, it is recommended for digestive complaints. Instead of an after dinner mint, try an after dinner cup of basil tea to aid digestion and expel gas. Steep a teaspoon of the dried leaves in a cup of boiled water. Herbalists recommend it for stomach cramps, vomiting, and constipation. Basil has been described as having a slight sedative action, which would explain why it is sometimes recommended for nervous headaches and anxiety.

Ornamental: An herb garden just isn't an herb garden without basil, but you'd be hard pressed to find it in the flower garden. But why not plant it there? The lovely green foliage can offset brilliantly colored flowers, and certainly the fragrance will be welcome."
(Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs 1987)

Teachers can free themselves from the notion that a basal must be read from cover to cover. All students do not need to begin with the same story and all students do not need to read every story. Placing children in cooperative reading groups to read a story together, to discuss it and then to write or answer questions together is a very viable way of helping the basal become a wonderful resource of reading materials.

One way to spice up the basal is to copy a story from the book and then blank out some of the words. The students then read and use context clues to fill in the blanks. The students can read their versions orally and compare with their classmates to see how many different words were used. This activity helps to strengthen the use of context clues and teaches students the value of synonyms. Students who have completed an activity such as this are bound to have a good understanding of the story.

Paraphrasing can also be done with a touch of oregano. The teacher can paraphrase a section of the story and then

ask students to find and read the portion of the story that has been paraphrased. More than one student can be asked to respond as some students will add lines they feel need to be included and others will omit lines they don't think are necessary. The group can then evaluate the responses and determine which response was the most accurate. This activity can also be turned around. The teacher can ask students to choose a paragraph and paraphrase it. Children can then ask other students to find the paragraph they described. Another way to have students practice these skills is to assign groups of students different sections of a story to paraphrase. As each group tells a section of the story in order, they are in effect giving a summary of the story.

Scrambled Sentence is a "basil" activity with lots of cutting. Cutting always improves the basil plant. Here are the steps to Scrambled Sentence:

1. Choose a sentence from your basal that contains some word or concept you want to practice. Write the sentence on a strip. The print should be large enough to be seen by your small group or your whole class. Introduce the strip to the group asking someone to read the sentence. Cut the sentence apart while everyone reads with you. (Clip each word off just after you read it.)

2. Scramble the words, then ask someone to come reassemble the sentence for the group. Ask someone to reread the sentence when it has been reassembled correctly. Now put the scrambled sentence in an envelope and use it in a center or as a "buddy" activity. As you collect several sentences you can begin to rotate them for review. Good for practice of context cues, structure cues, and sight words.

To vary this activity you might copy a whole paragraph from your basal, cut the sentences in phrases, and reassemble the paragraph. This could provide an opportunity to review the main idea and supporting details. Another variation would be to include a sentence or phrase in the scramble that doesn't belong and ask your group to determine the misfit piece. Providing a verification key would allow students to check their work without coming to you.

Jigsaw is an activity using many different "basil" stories, allowing students to have some choice in their reading material and to read selections with a touch of oregano which assures that their reading material is appropriate for their reading level.

This strategy encourages development of comprehension and rereading. Group members must figure out important concepts and how to teach them to another group or the whole class.

Here are the steps for Jigsaw:

1. Introduce reading choices to students. Depending on your objectives, assign a text selection or let students decide which selection they want to read and become responsible for teaching.

2. Students read.

3. Organize students into pairs with each member of the pair reading the same selection. Pair members then discuss points from their basal selection they want to teach others and how they plan to do so.

4. Each pair now shares their basal selection with the whole class or with members of another group with each pair then teaching the other.

Sandi English, Peggy Clark, Dorothy Dutton, Carol Mendiola, and Shawna Exline, are all members of the Horizons Reading Council.

In Praise of the Overseer

by Sarah Roesbery

Thank goodness for the Book Burners. Their one refuge is fire.
For they can tell society that certain books are dire.

If you find a book presenting views, to which you don't relate,
Go seek a person burning books and then participate.

Just throw the book into the flames and you will have done
well. Don't mind that it is someone's work. Who cares? I'll
never tell.

If you don't believe in something, don't let it get around.
Don't worry about the message or the knowledge to be found.

Don't let people hear about ideas that are not right.
Just ban the book and burn it. Out of mind means out of sight.

Control all of the people. They should do what you say.
Silence the authors of the boob! They've wronged and they should pay.

Keep annoying ideas from fertile minds and the world can belong to you.
Turn people into cyborgs. Tell them what to do.

I'm glad that there are people who are much smarter than me.
They'll tell me what I should read . . . and say and think and be.

This poem first place in the 1992 Pleiades Poetry Contest. Sarah Roesbery is currently a sophmore at Moscow High School.

Let's Write Across the Secondary Curriculum

Content Reading

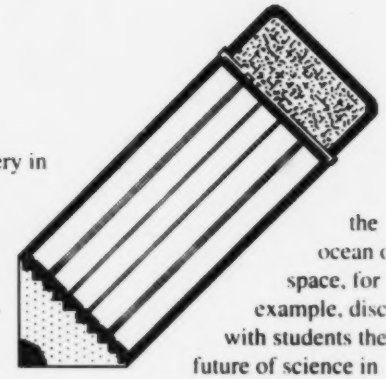
by Susan Fleming Beuscher

Every teacher is a reading and writing teacher. Although elementary teachers often integrate content areas thematically, it is more difficult to accomplish this in the secondary setting. By using content area texts and themes, the following reading and writing activities can add "spice" to any curriculum:

HISTORY:

Diaries:

Students can assume the role of a character from a particular era or event being studied. Students can then keep a diary on how they imagine the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the character. These entries can also be used for short stories. Example: In studying the history of slavery in the United States, students are asked to assume the role of a slave and make daily entries. A specific time period and setting are established. The writing then begins!



SCIENCE:

Writing Riddles:

In the study of Life Science there are many terms, plants, animals, etc. to be examined and committed to memory. Students can select an animal and write a riddle. Riddles can then be compiled into fun study guides, made into posters, or used to study for tests. Example:

I am in the animal kingdom.
I am a mammal.
I can hear in the dark.
I mostly eat moths, midges, and flies.
I roost with thousands of my kind in caves.
I am the only mammal capable of flight.
Who am I?(¡ɐq ∀)

Science Fiction Stories:

After studying a unit on the ocean or space, for example, discuss with students the future of science in these areas. Discuss what developments are possible in the future. Based on what could possibly exist in the deep ocean or space, or what could possibly happen in the future, write a science fiction story using the ocean or space as the setting. (This same activity can also be used with the rain forest, the desert, etc.)

The Newspaper:

While studying an environmental unit, ask students to collect newspaper articles which relate to the environment. These can be displayed on a bulletin board, used for class discussion, or used to study main ideas. Students can also write summaries or letters to the editor about the articles. There are usually several news stories relating to science and the environment in daily newspapers.

MATH:

Note Writing:

All students love to write notes! Here is your chance to use note writing in math class. After explaining a new math concept, each student in the class must then write a note to a classmate explaining the concept just covered. Of course, they may want to include a few tidbits of school gossip as well! This can also be used for more formal letter writing practice.

Poetry:

Write a poem explaining a math problem. This can be used for an entire class, small groups, or individuals. Students will need to understand the problem well before the rhyming begins.

Story Problems:

Using school related situations, students will write story problems. Example: The school's auditorium will hold 500 students, the school's population is. . . (Simplified, but. . .)

Have fun integrating reading and writing in content area classrooms. Look for more ideas in the next issue of PORTALS.

About the author:

Susan Fleming Buescher is a member of Heartland Reading Council and a teacher at McCall-Donnelly Junior High.

Family Secrets

by Carolyn Tragesser

After he checks once more, pats the little bed
he leaves to his quarters to spend
the rest of the night. He forbids
volunteers in the garden, allows
only his plants. Tilling years
pruning, caring bloom.
Each spring the young emerge, delight his eye
Morning dew shows their beauty,
and he fondles the tender young leaves,
his labor, his pride. The pansy bed
one day was violated. Before
the sun penetrated, first buds
were plucked from the rest.
Careless feet crushed tender shoots.
Garden beautiful, ruined now.
Who could say why?
At first, no one suspected the husbandman
Destroyed his own creation.

Carolyn Tragesser is an eight grade English teacher and G/T Facilator at Moscow Junior High School and a member of Tamarack Reading Council.

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PORTALS
A Journal of the Idaho Council
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Call For Papers

The editors of the PORTALS invite all Idaho Council of the International Reading Association (ICIRA) members and others interested in literacy development to submit articles for publication. Articles for the spring edition must be postmarked by March 1, 1994.

PORTALS is the primary publication of the ICIRA and thus serves as a format to promote literacy development for all people in our state. The ICIRA is a major supporter of teachers of the Language Arts, and serves as an important resource for those teachers. Classroom teachers, especially, are encouraged to write about their practices, their action research projects, and issues affecting teachers, students, and the educational community.

Manuscript Form

Manuscripts should be word processed (or typewritten), double-spaced on 8 1/2" X 11" paper. Manuscripts of various lengths will be accepted but typically should not exceed 12 pages including tables, figures, and references.

Articles appearing in PORTALS will eventually be formatted according to the style prescribed by the third edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 1983). Although authors are not required to use this style in their initial manuscript submission, they must include complete bibliographic information in their list of references.

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Submit *four* copies of all manuscripts along with two self-addressed, stamped letter-size envelopes for correspondence. All copies must be dark and clear. With the manuscript please provide a separate cover page that includes the title, author(s), complete address(es), phone number(s), and institutional affiliation(s) of the author(s). If your manuscript has been word processed, please send a diskette with a copy of the manuscript. Indicate the format (Apple, Macintosh, or IBM), the software program used, and the file name.

Mail all submissions to:

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Articles submitted to PORTALS are reviewed anonymously (blind review) by three members of the Editorial Advisory Board. Manuscripts are judged for their potential contribution to the field, usefulness to teachers or other educators, freshness of approach, quality of writing, and cohesiveness of presentation. Manuscript selection also depends on the editors' determination of overall balance of content in the journal.

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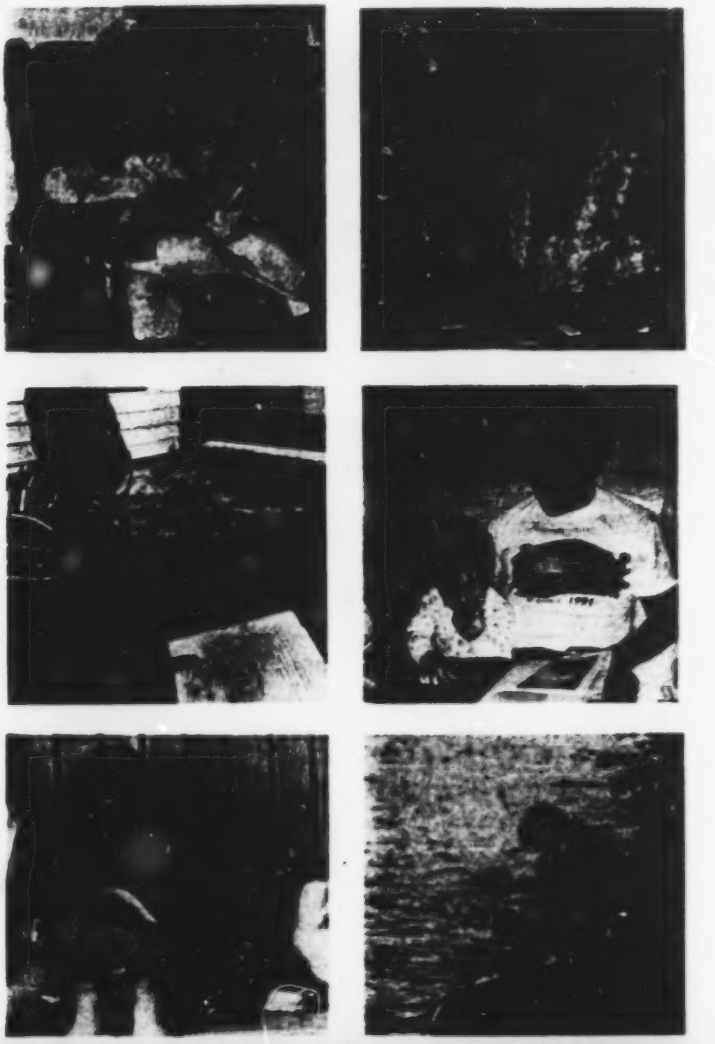

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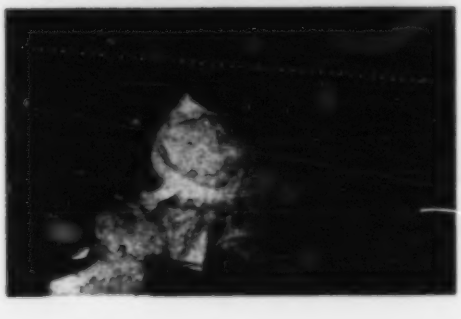

PORTALS is published semiannually by the Idaho Council International Reading Association. Membership in the ICIRA automatically includes a subscription to PORTALS. The journal is intended to provide ICIRA members and others interested in literacy development with a forum for discussion of ideas, trends, and issues related to literacy teaching and learning, as well as dissemination of news related to the ICIRA and its local and national affiliates. Articles by teachers, researchers, and others are encouraged. Because the ICIRA serves as an open forum, items published in PORTALS do not necessarily reflect endorsement by ICIRA, its officers, or members.

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Beverly J. Klug
President, ICIRA

A Message From The President

Greetings! I want to thank each of you for your work this year to make the local councils and ICIRA work even better than they have before. We have many talented individuals in our organization who dedicate a great deal of time and energy to literacy development.

The theme of ICIRA this year is, "Literacy: the Key to Dreams." I would like to explore this theme with you. At the summer leadership conference, we asked the councils to tell us what their dreams and visions were for their members. We hope now that, as councils, you have been able to achieve your dreams.

As a state council, we also had a dream: to create a publication that we would all be very proud of, that looked professional, and that met the needs of our members as professionals in the field of reading. I think we have achieved that goal. I would like to thank the editorial team for their dedication.

We all have our own personal dreams, dreams which brought us into the teaching profession. I don't know about you, but by the third grade, I knew I wanted to be a teacher and that teaching was a place where I could make a contribution, a difference. Of course, I had a certain amount of youthful romanticism because I looked up to my teachers as heroes, friends, and sources of inspiration. They made a difference in my life when they acknowledged me as a person and made me feel important. My teachers encouraged and inspired me to become whatever I dreamed possible.

I would venture that there is at least one teacher in your life who was truly inspirational to you, who encouraged you to dream your dreams and to become whatever you wanted to become.

Literacy is the key to dreams. In the past, literacy was not critically necessary for success in one's profession or in other life options, but today, without literacy, a person's dreams remain unrealized and stifled, lacking the means to achieve them. Sadly, estimates in Idaho are that one out of every three Idahoans is functionally illiterate.

Those estimates have not improved very much from ten years ago. Our teenage pregnancy rate is one of the highest in the nation. In Idaho, the dropout rate is 25% overall. For our Native Americans, it is still over 40%; for our Latino population it is over 60%. Are these children, the future of our state, realizing their dreams?

As you know, Idaho's demographics have been changing rapidly. We now have 40 language groups in the state. Twelve language groups are in the Caldwell and Nampa school districts alone. Twelve thousand students are being served in ESL programs out of a school population of over 210,000. Of those, 5,000 LEP (Limited English Proficient) students are trying to acquire basic survival English. What an opportunity for us to develop literacy in our state and to provide inspiration for future dreams! I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president and to be able to share this message with you.

I would venture that there is at least one teacher in your life who was truly inspirational to you, who encouraged you to dream your dreams and to become whatever you wanted to become.

In Idaho, the drop out rate is 25% overall. For our Native Americans, it is still over 40%; for our Latino population it is over 60%.

The views and opinions published in PORTALS are not necessarily those of ICIRA, the editorial board or staff.

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Pictured below from left to right in the front row are Pamela Ward, Lynne Ball, Beverly Klug and Susan Fleming Buescher. In the back row are Erin L. Donovan, Marilyn Howard, Cheryl Sisco and Caroline Bitterwolf.

Elementary Teacher

"Oh, you ought to be a teacher,"
that's what everybody said.
The pay is not so good here,
barely keeps the family fed.
But what you have to offer kids
just cannot be denied.
You've got to open up your heart
and share what's deep inside . . .
Enthusiasm, compassion, caring too!

Now, it's really plain to see
teachers have a gift to share.
They have a love for learning
and capacity to care.
They have a deep commitment
and they do their job with pride.
They plant the seeds of knowledge;
students blossom at their side. . .
Kindergarten, first grade, on through sixth.

A teacher has so much to do
to educate the class.
"How will I ever manage
helping everyone to pass?"
The children come to school each day
with problems and with woes.
The hardest thing to teach, sometimes,
is, "How to blow your nose."
Hungry! Coat-less! Colds and flu!

The gift that is the teacher
is ingrained, it's deep inside.
You'll eventually discover,
from its power you can't hide.
The children are our future;
molding them is in your hand.
When their eyes light up their faces,
then you'll know they understand.
Curious explorers, adventurous too!

Teaching reading, math, and science
is not all you have to do.
Helping children fit into our world
is really up to you.
Community and teamwork,
you must teach the golden rule:
"Be kind unto your neighbor,
or you will stay after school."
Children, teachers, parents too!

by Karen M. Stear
Elementary Education Major
Boise State University
(Can be sung to the tune of "The Beverly Hillbillies Theme.")

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May

8-13 Thirty-ninth Annual IRA Convention
Toronto, Canada

July

14-17 Whole Language Umbrella
San Diego, CA

17-22 IRA World Congress
Buenos Aires, Argentina

25-27 ICIRA Leadership Planning
Boise, ID
Lynne Ball, President
Leadership Planning Committee

August

1-5 BSU Literacy Education Conference
Boise, ID

October

6-7 ICIRA Reading Conference
Boise, ID

Dear ICIRA Members:

It is great to have such a nice way to communicate with our ICIRA Membership throughout the state. We held our Winter Leadership Meetings in Boise the end of January. It was great to see you all! I think the most significant outcomes of my serving on the ICIRA Board are the sensational people I have worked with and have come to regard as my friends. I have met people from all over the state, and each time we meet it is like ""Old Home Week."

As of March 1st, we have 1431 current members of ICIRA. These numbers are down from the last few years. In 1991-92 we had 1509 members. There are more groups or causes rivaling for members now, and we do have to make choices of which organizations to belong to.

We are looking forward to another great year at ICIRA. Our Summer Leadership will be in Boise in July. Thank you for the support that we have felt from your membership. We have endeavored to provide you educational and emotional support for all the changes occurring in education today.

Sincerely,
Kristie Stratford, Membership Chairman, ICIRA

For ICIRA Membership information contact:

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(208) 233-4050

Honor Council News

by Suzanne Gregg
Honor Council Chairperson

Dear Readers:

As Honor Council Chairperson, I'm fortunate enough to be able to read about all the exciting and innovative programs going on with individual councils.

Our theme this year, "Literacy: The Key To Dreams," is one that I see being lived out by dedicated and caring council members. I feel proud to be a member of such a dynamic group!

Thanks to all the councils who have been prompt in following deadlines. As discussed at the ICIRA winter Executive Board Meeting, the May 15th deadline will stay the same.

I encourage all councils to set goals in achieving Honor Council and congratulate those who have achieved this honor in the past.

Our patrons', colleagues' and students' lives are enriched because of your efforts.

Article

Reading: Unplugged

by Phillip N. Venditti

When I prepared seven years ago to teach introductory English composition in a community college, one of my major goals was to encourage, among my students, the habit of reading. Reading well and widely, I thought, would naturally help these people boost every aspect of their literacy -- cultural, social, and communicative.

Little did I know then, in 1987, that the development of whole language theory was already in full swing around the United States and that more and more authorities in elementary and secondary education were espousing comprehensive processes to promote language skills. Then, as now, exchange of information among educational professionals across the boundaries of the academic spectrum was scanty.

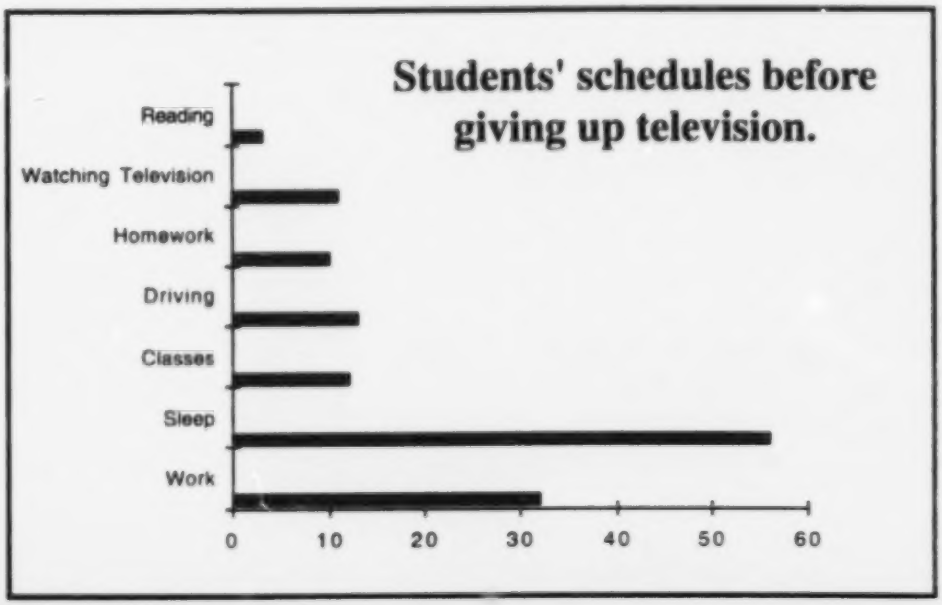
Unfortunately, one of the first realizations I experienced in my classroom was that obstacles existed to increasing the students' reading activity. Foremost among these obstacles was that most of the men and women were responsible for families and were employed outside the home on at least a part-time basis. Discretionary time for reading was extremely difficult for them to find. Furthermore, most of them were not accustomed to reading for pleasure on a regular basis.

Within a short period, however, the majority of people in our class had indeed begun spending more time reading than many of them ever had before. The remainder of this article will explain the process by which this transformation came to pass and describe its outcomes.

During our third class session, at the end of the first week of the semester, my students drew approximate pie charts comprising all their weekly activities. The charts revealed that students worked an average of 32 hours a week, slept 56 hours, attended classes 12 hours, spent 13 hours driving to and from class and work, and devoted about 10 hours to homework.

The pie exercise also showed that my students spent fewer than three hours each week in leisure reading. Such a modest level of reading was just what I had suspected, and it was something I hoped to improve. Now—where could the students find time to hike their reading time?

The answer to this question grew out of the fact that the students said they spent nearly 11 hours watching television each week. Although this figure lay just a bit under the national average for adults, which in recent years has been estimated at around 15 hours (Baldwin, 1994, p. 54; Naisbitt, 1990, p. 2), it was nevertheless nearly two hours per day. I found my students' circumstances to be an ironic reversal of what one *New York Times* reviewer is reputed to have written about the prototype television demonstrated at the 1939



World's Fair: "The problem with television is that the people must sit and keep their eyes glued on a screen; the average American family hasn't time for it" (*Fit to Print*, 1992, p.124).

On the basis of the information students had provided concerning their weekly schedules, I issued the class a challenge modeled after an experiment which had been attempted that same year by a public school in Chicago (Martin, 1987). Instead of writing a standard research paper, those students who wanted to surpass the other requirements for "C's" or B's" in the course could contract for "A's" by forswearing television for the next four months.

At least half the time that the students used to spend watching TV would be devoted to reading materials of their choice, with any remainder available for any other activities they preferred. In other words, the typical student would be more than doubling his or her weekly reading time.

Initial reactions were skeptical. One student confided later in her dialog journal, "When you first mentioned the option I thought you were nuts." Still, more than two thirds of the class pledged to forswear television. All these adventurous souls signed contracts, based on their pie charts, pledging how many television-viewing hours each week they would turn over to reading.

The terms of our agreement obligated participants to keep a log of their readings throughout the semester. As time passed, the contents of these logs varied widely according to students' personalities and abilities. Some people read horror tales and mysteries, some consumed romance novels and Hollywood exposés, quite a few sampled short stories, one or two tried out some scientific journals in their areas of interest, and several pursued a diet of magazines and newspaper articles. A few individuals started out with short journalistic items and later tackled longer stories and novels. Many stuck primarily to nonfiction works, although fiction seemed to attract an equally strong following.

At the end of the semester, I asked all the students to write about their experiences. Several of them recalled how doubtful they had been when they first considered giving up TV. One young man commented, "My opinion to [sic] forswearing TV was, at first I didn't like it." Another individual wrote, "I found it hard at first to get into gear," and yet another stated, "my original thoughts were that I would not have enough time to devote to either reading or my other chores."

On the other hand, many people remarked at the end of the term that they had been able to adjust to a TV-free routine. One statement illustrates this point: "Even though I thought it would be very hard to stop completely, to my surprise it hasn't been very hard. I guess it is just a matter of setting your mind to it and following through."

A number of individuals commented favorably concerning the effects of the semester's experiment on their reading habits. Several people contended that their vocabularies had improved and their reading speed had increased, and one woman claimed she intended to keep reading more in the future:

> Not watching TV was really quite an experience. I don't think I've ever gone that long without TV. However, it really was interesting. I actually got a chance to read and be a little more aware of what was going on and what other people were thinking (both by reading their books and actually reading the newspaper). I expect I now make more time to read, something I did when it was only mandatory.

Being given the option to read whatever they wanted—instead of having to accept mass assignments along with all their fellow students—appealed to several people. One fitness-conscious man wrote the following concerning the individual value of his readings:

> I have found that reading can be a lot more enjoyable when you read something you want to read rather than something you are forced to read.
>
> Since the semester started I've noticed my daily routine became more strict than before. I stayed at work longer and I stayed at the gym longer because in the back of my mind I knew I couldn't go home and watch TV.
>
> I've learned a lot from reading Muscle and Fitness. I have new ideas for workouts and recipes.

By the end of the semester, both the attitudes and the behaviors of most participants in the experiment seemed to have shifted. One individual wrote, "I found that by reading instead of watching television I had a lot more time in my day to do other things." Likewise, one woman who expressed initial reservations said at the conclusion of the term that she had changed her outlook:

> It was a habit to go home and turn on the TV. But... I got really interested in the books I was reading and I had no desire to

By the end of the semester, both the attitudes and the behavior of most participants in the experiment seemed to have shifted. One individual wrote that "I found that by reading instead of watching television I had a lot more time in my day to do other things."

watch TV. My heavy schedule with school and work made it easy also.

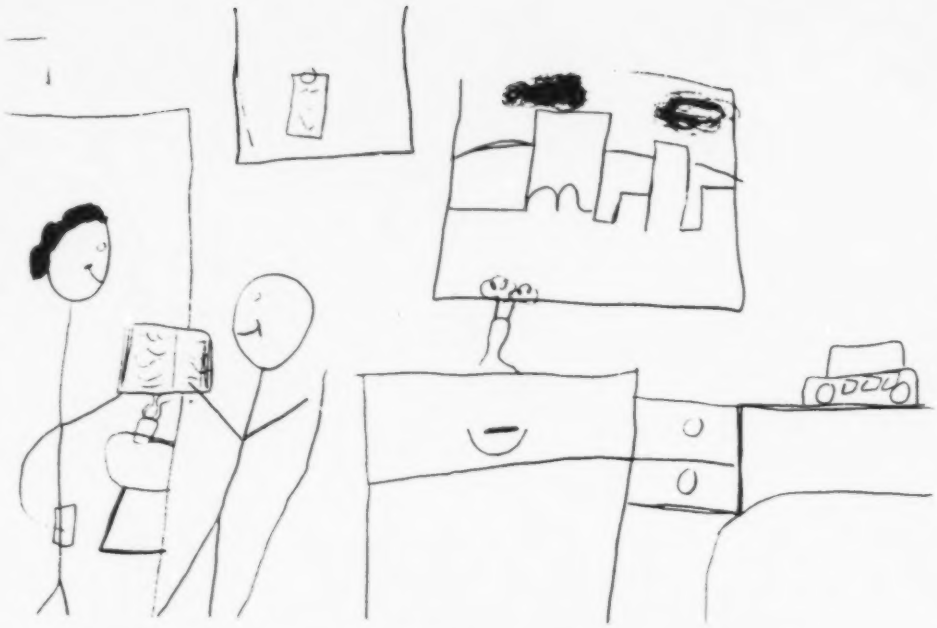
I think this activity was really worthwhile. Before I used to be lazy and lay *[sic]* around and watch TV. Now I don't even think about it. If it wasn't for this activity I would have never got out of this habit.

Even the family relationships of some students were influenced by the experiment. One woman said that she had discovered reading to be more enjoyable and stimulating than television. . . but "I had difficulty sitting in another room from my husband. Although we used to watch TV together and not really talk, we were together. By having to be in another room, we felt isolated from each other." On the other hand, another student noted a positive impact within her family:

> Since I was not allowed to watch TV for this last semester I have noticed that the no TV situation has rubbed off on my husband Paul also. He has been reading a lot of novels and he very rarely will turn on the TV now. He always enjoyed reading but said he never had time. But now he can't wait to finish dinner so he can start reading.

Numerous problems among American children and adults have been attributed to the presence of television or to the contents of much of its programming. A good part of the blame for apathy, violence, lack of imagination, short attention spans, and deficient critical thinking skills among school children has been laid by some critics at the feet of the TV broadcast industry.

Of course, determining whether the sundry criticisms of television are warranted is beyond the scope of this article. Regardless of the merits or drawbacks of the medium, however, the generally favorable outcomes of this experiment lead me to believe that nudging students to allocate some of their television-watching time to reading may represent one productive component of nearly any class in the public schools, just as I found it to be at the community college level.



Artwork by Megan Mattocks, Mrs. Gregg's 2nd grade class, Boise School District.

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Article

The Caldecott and Newbery Award Winners: An Interview with Walter Lorraine, Vice President, Director, and Executive Editor at Houghton Mifflin, February 27, 1994.

by Norma Sadler

On Monday, February 27, 1994, in a phone interview, I spoke with Mr. Walter Lorraine, the Executive Editor at Houghton Mifflin for both Allen Say, the 1994 Caldecott Award Winner for Grandfather's Journey, *and Lois Lowry, the 1994 Newbery Award Winner for* The Giver.

Rarely, would one publisher, such as Houghton Mifflin, have both winners, but even rarer is the possibility that one editor, such as Walter Lorraine, would have both the Caldecott Award and Newbery Award winners for 1994 under his editorship. Such is the case this year. What could it be like to be an editor and work with Allen Say and Lois Lowry? And what does it mean to "edit" when one is already working with two of the finest writers in the field? For PORTALS' readers, Mr. Lorraine responds to questions about Allen Say and Lois Lowry:

When did you first begin working as an editor with Allen Say?

I became acquainted with Allen's work when he did a number of children's books for other presses. He seemed quite superior in the way he thought and the way he expressed himself in his art. We worked out new publications for him. One that became a Caldecott Honor book for his illustrations was *The Boy of the Three Year Nap*. That was at a time when he wanted to give up children's books, but he worked with us on that book. I've worked with him ever since. By the way, Houghton Mifflin will be re-releasing *The Ink-Keeper's Apprentice* with an introduction by Allen Say soon.

Lois Lowry

Why do you think Allen Say writes?

A writer writes because he has something to say. That's not surprising. Allen has something to say. He's working out things in his writing. His last book works out a dilemma. *Grandfather's Journey* is the story of a person who almost has too many countries. Allen contrasts those worlds, showing how his character must eventually find his own place in the world and society.

Why would children like Grandfather's Journey?

It's silly to categorize books, but I know the field demands it. A good book is for all ages, and for children, if it's accessible to them. A book like *Grandfather's Journey* is one for which a child doesn't need an adult experience in order to appreciate its content. Any young reader can appreciate the most complex philosophies if they are accessible. For kids, the theme of alienation in *Grandfather's Journey* is a modern problem of society, and the quest or search for belonging is something children as well as adults can identify with.

How long have you worked with Lois Lowry?

I started working with her in the early seventies with her first book *A Summer to Die* and have been working with her up through her latest book *The Giver*.

How would you characterize Lois Lowry's writing?

Lois has lots of depth and shows that, even in her more humorous works like the Anastasia books. Rarely do books so humorous say so much about human relationships. She is a unique talent. She seems to understand human relationships and conveys that better than anyone else I've met. Her style is important because she

Allen Say

Born in Japan, Allen Say studied art in Tokyo. Since moving to the United States at sixteen, he has been an architecture student at Berkeley, a free-lance photographer, and a writer and illustrator of children's books. He worked on the drawings for *Grandfather's Journey* for over two years.

He was the illustrator for *The Boy of the Three Year Nap*, a Caldecott Honor Book. Some of the books he has written and illustrated include: *A River Dream*, a fantasy about fly fishing, *El Chino*, a biography of a Chinese bullfighter, and *The Tree of Cranes*, a sensitive celebration, merging two cultures. He lives and works in San Francisco.

Far to the East, in an old farmhouse in Massachusetts where she lives, Lois Lowry writes, using a computer. Her books, like Allen Say's, cover a range of topics. *A Summer to Die* (grades 4-8) is the poignant story of a person dying young. *Number The Stars*, a Newbery Award winner, is a tribute to Danes who hid a Jewish family during World War II.

In *The Giver*, a dystopia (a marred utopia) jars readers with a rigid grey world without the colors of memory or empathy. *The Giver* brings readers back to the questioning of what it means to be human -- to survive, to accept, and to love.

Both Lois Lowry and Allen Say offer children and adults new perspectives on the human condition through children's literature.

Editing is a subjective business. When you read something, you like it or you don't like it. As an editor, you have to figure out why you don't like it.

has a sense of meter, of sound, that you sense from the first page. There's so much substance there. She has a lot to say, and she's someone that is satisfying to listen to because she's always on the mark.

Why would children pick up one of Lois Lowry's books to read?

Lois is one who is nonjudgmental. She doesn't put people into boxes, and she accepts people divergent from her own code of ethics. That's evident from the diverse friendships she has in life. She really understands people and she writes to express that. In the Anastasia books, she can get across family conflict in just a few sentences. In her book *The Giver*, a strange cautionary tale about getting sucked into the clichés of superficial utopias, she shows us how easy it is for a society to become entrapped. By her understanding of people and by showing their complexity and what makes them who they are, she always has something to say, and it's pertinent.

Parents, as well as kids, love her books and Allen

Say's because they write about the human condition. That is, after all, what we're all concerned with.

So what's it like to work as an editor with Allen Say and Lois Lowry?

First, I think I'd better tell you what an editor's function is. It's simpler than most people think. It's a personal connection and involvement with the writer. I see myself as a provocateur rather than a critic. Editing is a subjective business. When you read something, you like it or you don't like it. As an editor, you have to figure out why you don't like it. For instance, maybe there's a character, such as an aunt in a third chapter, that could mess up the plot line. It might be the editor's conviction that it's so, but that doesn't mean it's absolutely so. The author, disagreeing with the editor, might say it's not the aunt in the third chapter, but instead a character in the first chapter that's throwing the plot line off. In the end, what this discussion does is focus the author, who has a long period of learned time on his writing, to get a new perspective -- allowing him or her to see things differently. You need an objective eye to be an editor. It's almost impossible for an author to be his own editor. An author can sometimes hold on to what needs to be left out. The editor jogs the writer to see with a new and fresh eye.

What did you work on with Allen Say?

On *Grandfather's Journey*, Allen had a rough outline some time ago that he showed me. But Allen sees images. He is a visual person and does the art before the text. That's unusual since many people who illustrate their own books have the text done first, then draw the illustrations to go with them. But the story statement is important regardless of the medium -- be it words or pictures. Allen uses the pictures to make the story statement, and then he does the words to go with them.

What about working with Lois Lowry?

I loved *Number the Stars*. Lois has a natural inner ear for her story and the sound of her story. She is visual too, and at one time did professional photography. Again, the meter, the sound and the rhythm of the words is phenomenal. When you read books, you can judge them by how long it takes to get used to the style of the author. For many authors, it takes maybe half a chapter to get used to the writing. For Lois Lowry, it is one sentence, and you're comfortable with her.

And in the future, how do you think their works will be received?

Both Allen and Lois have something to say to readers that will always be relevant to them. Why do we read? We might read to experience vicariously what it means to be alienated, such as in Allen Say's *Grandfather's Journey*. Through the author's eyes we see these stories and feel reassurance for what we experience. We are more comfortable after having that experience with the author.

I was thinking about David Macaulay's book, *The Way Things Work*, an encyclopedia really of why things work the way they do. This book is so important and popular to children and adults.

Why? I think because readers want to see the way things worked for David Macaulay as well as seeing how things worked.

That concluded my interview with Walter Lorraine. I want to add that we, the readers, all want to see the story and we want to know about the author behind the story, so we do want to know the way things were for *Grandfather's Journey* and Allen Say and for *The Giver* and Lois Lowry. And, by traveling with Allen Say and Lois Lowry to different places and times with different characters, we understand the human condition even more for having done so.

About the author:
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When you read books, you can judge them by how long it takes to get used to the style of the author. For many authors, it takes maybe half a chapter to get used to the writing.

Article

Integrating Literacy and Thought Through Play: The Teacher's Role

by Sally Peña, Judy French and Allan Cook

The play of young children provides endless possibilities for literacy development through the use of oral and written language and reading (Morrow, 1993). When young children play, they engage in a variety of basic mental activities that generate school-related skills as well as critical, higher level thinking (Daiute, 1989; Hendrick, 1992). In addition, play enables children to employ a variety of naturally occurring learning processes, including discovery, problem solving, inquiry, and metacognition. This framework does not ignore the mandated scope and sequence of the curriculum, but reinforces and extends skills within the context of play activities. Dramatic play, in particular, lends itself well to situations in which oral and written language may be enhanced, as suggested in the following scenarios:

Scenario 1: "This is my block building. Nobody knock it down. Not ever until cleanup time," states Jerod, a four-year old, who asks his teacher to write his message. After printing it, the teacher hands Jerod the marker, and he laboriously writes his own name. Then the teacher reads the entire message and asks Jerod if he wants to read it to the other children or tape it to his block construction. Jerod decides to post the note. Having completed this task, Jerod chooses to sit down at the art center and glue a collage. Several times during the remaining play time, he notices other children playing with wooden trucks and cars near his building. He gets up and points to his sign and explains that the other children need to be careful not to knock his building down.

Scenario 2: "Craig wants to wear the forest ranger shirt tomorrow" is the message requested by another child as play time ends. The next day he asks his teacher to write "Don't take this note down. Leave it up every day." The teacher responds by placing the dictated note next to the calendar.

These two preschoolers, Jerod and Craig, are discovering the power of print in a personally meaningful context: that of their own pretend play processes.

Scenario 3: In a primary grade classroom, the children are engaged in a social studies project of learning about their city. The children have taken field trips to various sections of the city and are currently constructing a model of the city, using cereal boxes, large sheets of butcher paper and various other child-constructed props.

As Daria and Melanie work to build a residential neighborhood out of small milk cartons, they also draw and cut out the children and families who live in some of the houses. The teacher observes them moving these people back and forth and creating pretend conversations and scenarios as they work. She inquires about where the mother of two of the pretend children works. Melanie and Daria assert that she works at the Idaho Power company, a large elaborate building constructed by another child in the class.

The teacher encourages Daria and Melanie to work with another child who had developed the power company and with another group of children who were driving cars through the streets and investigating how traffic lights work. As the teacher observes these groups of children building, she connects their play ideas and an entire subproject emerges.

Children write letters to the power company and to

other city entities. Over time the city project evolves beyond the basic plan of building a model of the city. Drawings are made and reports are written about a nearby reservoir as a power source. Batteries, wires and bulbs are connected throughout sections of the city. Finally, children summarize their work, write individual stories and reports, plan a class presentation, and invite parents to view the final product.

The Importance of Play

Why is play considered an essential element of young children's learning? As the preceding scenarios suggest, children's play provides a fertile and intensely personal base from which children's thought and literacy emerge. Play can continue to nourish and enrich children's ongoing learning and literacy endeavors through the primary grades. As Morrow (1993) asserts, "In dramatic play, children are voluntarily participating in reading and writing" (p. 286). They are simultaneously acquiring lifelong dispositions toward learning.

Early childhood theory suggests that play serves as the process through which children come to understand and assimilate the rituals and traditions of their society (Erikson, 1977). For young children, pretend play is the means through which they abstract information (Gilmore, 1971; Rogers & Sawyers, 1988), rehearse and store it in memory (Huesmann & Eron, 1986), and come to master situations that are too big for them in the real world (Gilmore, 1971). Additional literature suggests that fantasy play may be linked to creativity, cognitive flexibility, divergent thinking, and social understanding and literacy development (Athey, 1984; Bretherton, 1984; Daiute, 1989; Fein, 1981; Schrader, 1990; Van Hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 1993; Wasserman, 1993).

The Connection Between Play and Literacy

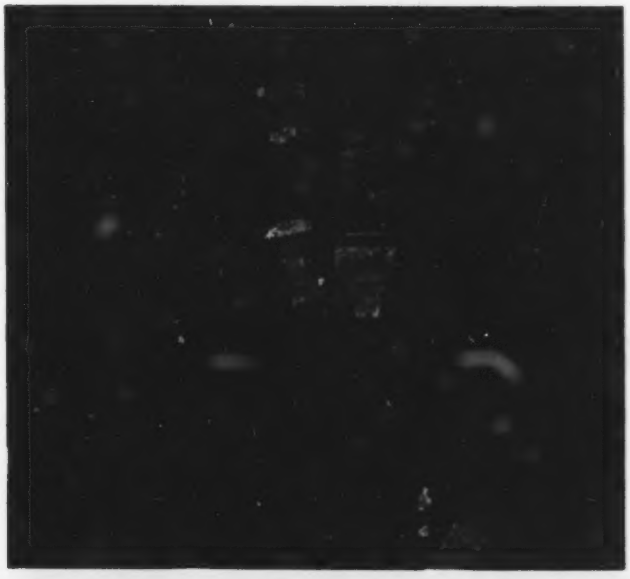
The current emergent literacy approach appears to share many features of children's play. Marie Clay (1976) notes that as children mature, their play appears to parallel the initial steps of writing ability; i.e., they become increasingly competent in attending and orienting to the task, in investigating and exploring the dimensions of the task, and they become increasingly self-directed in sequencing and carrying out a set of movements. Clay further asserts that such learning would contribute directly to reading progress.

Mason and Sinha (1993) include the following features in a summary of principles of emergent literacy:

- Literacy emerges before children are formally taught to read.
- Literacy is defined to encompass the whole act of reading, not just decoding.
- The child's point of view and active involvement with literacy constructs is featured.
- The social setting for literacy learning is not ignored. (p. 141)

The play experiences of the children in the scenarios presented earlier demonstrated a number of similar processes. Jerod, Craig, Daria, Melanie, and the other children had not been formally taught to play, yet they engaged in the pretend play as a natural process evolving from their environments. For these children, the play process was holistic, active, and social. They drew from their own experiences as well as from experiences in the classroom setting for their play themes; they were both physically and mentally active in the creation and enactment of the play; and their pretend play involved other children as well.

Nourot and Van Hoorn (1991) explain that when preschool and primary grade



They drew from their own experiences as well as from experiences in the classroom setting for their play themes . . .

Photographs by Robin Holmes, 2/3 grade classroom, Boise School District.

A teacher who provides effective scaffolding for children is one who knows children well.

children transform reality into symbolic play, they are employing the same type of mental processing that is needed to understand that combinations of letters can symbolize sounds and words, and to understand the "as if" realm of books, stories, and poems.

Daiute (1989) asserts that play is a form of thought for school-aged children which is drawn upon as children learn to write. She observed the cooperative writing efforts of children in three primary grade classrooms and noted play in numerous forms. As children wrote, Daiute saw instances of the children playing with sounds and meanings of language, role playing the characters and story sequences they developed in their writing, trying out new concepts and facts, bantering with one another in playful competition, and playing with imagery.

The Practice of Play in Public Schools

Generally, teachers of young children through age eight acknowledge the research and theory base affirming play as the child's primary mode of learning. However, in daily practice, we have observed that many teachers restrict the opportunities for children to play to those times when the "real work" of learning has already taken place.

In many kindergarten classes, for example, we see children spending time in an opening circle directed by the teacher. After the opening circle, children are given specific learning center assignments. Finally, when the learning center assignment is completed, children are permitted to select an activity of their choice until time for the next activity. This free-choice activity time typically lasts ten to twenty minutes, usually until all children have finished with their learning center assignments and the teacher has checked their work.

In primary classrooms, we see that the situations are often similar. Games, learning centers, and free-choice opportunities are available only to the children who have completed their assigned classroom "work." Unfortunately, many teachers conclude that very little "real" learning takes place when short, self-initiated play activity times cause children to play in a hurried and sometimes frenzied way.

Recognizing the learning outcomes embedded in the play process and scheduling sufficient play time (Christie & Wardle, 1992) are closely related issues. Schrader (1990) theorizes that many teachers limit children's symbolic play in favor of activities related to narrowly defined academic skills because they do not know how to function effectively within the context of child's play or they may not recognize the relationship between play and the curriculum content.

Teacher Scaffolding

Higher level thought in play, which can lead to subsequent literacy development as well as the integration of other curricular areas, is a function of sufficient time, a supportive social-emotional climate, developmentally appropriate equipment and materials, and effective teacher communication. In other words, productive play is a function of skillful teacher scaffolding. Scaffolding is a process of "setting up challenges and assisting children to work 'on the edge' of their current competence or for pushing the limits of their current developmental level" (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p. 40). Scaffolding involves both establishing a learning environment and setting up instructional situations that allow children to succeed as they advance toward higher levels of understanding (Mason & Sinha, 1993). When teachers provide effective scaffolding of children's literacy and play experiences, they supply a framework which supports each child with an optimal intellectual challenge.

Schrader (1990) explains the complexity of the teacher's role in extending children's learning through play:

> They are constantly called upon to respond to a number of variables and to make situational decisions. They cannot use preplanned lessons. This requires teachers to focus not on teaching per se but on the process of learning which belongs to the child. (p. 99)

This does not imply that scaffolding children's play for literacy development is a haphazard or random event. A teacher who provides effective scaffolding for children is one who knows children well. This teacher is well versed in child development and the emergent stages and processes linked to literacy. She anticipates and plans "behind the scenes" for the abilities she knows will evolve. She also has a personal relationship with each child in which there are ample amounts of trust, respect, and warmth. She exhibits a caring intensity and sensitivity to each child in individually supportive ways.

Effective teacher scaffolding includes a social-emotional climate of acceptance. Such a climate is one in which it is not only safe, but expected, that each child will try, will take risks, and will sometimes make mistakes. This climate includes developmentally appropriate interactions in which acceptable stress levels are closely monitored (Blasco, P. M., Hrncir, & Blasco, P.A., 1990; Malsin, Bretherton, & Morgan, 1986). In this classroom, disequilibrium is seen as the opportunity for new learning to take place and for learning dispositions to be strengthened.

When a teacher supports learning through careful scaffolding, he observes each child at play. He tries to tune in to the child's point of view and to "gauge the amount of support and challenge necessary for optimal growth" (Curry & Johnson, 1990, p. 93). This teacher is a wise decision-maker who decides whether or not to intervene and extend a child's learning (Schrader, 1990), keeping in mind that his goal is to empower children to think and to strengthen each child's disposition to be a learner (Katz & Chard, 1989).

The context in which effective teacher scaffolding can take place is one in which the teacher has high expectations for children; i.e., she expects children to think, to be persistent, to be personally involved in their learning, and to exhibit other dispositions which promote learning.

Teachers can support the play and literacy development of preschool children by providing play settings and by being alert to opportunities in which play might be focused or extended. Play can be focused or extended by drawing pictures, telling stories, labeling objects, making lists, and writing notes and instructions for each other, either through dictation (as in language experience stories) or developmental spelling (invented spelling). Morrow (1993) cites an example of a play-based classroom project in which children role played supermarket. The play was scaffolded through the provision of food and detergent containers, a telephone and directory, note pads, signs and advertisements for food and other items. The materials were easy to obtain, and they encouraged children to see the connection between literacy and "real life" situations.

To promote higher level thinking in children, the teacher must also be disposed to be a higher level thinker herself.

In the primary grades, as the abilities of of older students emerge, they can also begin to record their experiences in writing in the form of plays, narratives and reports. Teachers provide scaffolding by using play as a follow up to story reading. This creative play supports both the child's appreciative and interpretive listening skills and provides insight into how well the child has comprehended the story (Salinger, 1988). Many story books lend themselves well to this kind of activity.

In summary, scaffolding for play-based learning and literacy development requires both general and personal knowledge of children, careful observation, and decision making. To promote higher level thinking in children, teachers must also be disposed to be higher level thinkers themselves. They must be able to "think on their feet," verbalizing what they observe and asking open-ended questions which cause children to think critically and to synthesize emergent literacy skills with personally significant play

Table 1
TEACHER SCAFFOLDS TO SUPPORT, FOCUS, OR EXTEND PLAY

SUPPORT

Nonverbal:

—stand back, allow a child to solve his own problem
—add supplies as needed
—maintain proximity to a child as he works on a problem - sit or kneel nearby
—make facial contact - "catch an eye", smile, nod, etc.

Verbal:

—help a child define the problem or state a goal
—express confidence in a child's ability to solve her problem
—offer carefully placed and tentative suggestions as a child shows signs of need
—summarize a child's work by expressing recognition of feelings, sense of accomplishment, hard work, time spent, what didn't work, what is needed next

FOCUS

Descriptions:

—describe to the child what you have observed him
a) doing
b) figuring out, discovering, solving, learning

Questions:

—ask the child
a) what he did, how he did it
b) how he figured it out, knew what to do, discovered, solved, learned
c) what he needs in order to...

EXTEND

Connections:

—ask questions to build bridges between present activity and other knowledge, interests

Expansions:

—ask questions to expand explorations, inquiry into new, yet unknown territory

themes and activities. For example, Melanie and Daria's teacher observed them pretending and asked a few questions to gain information for herself. She then used that information to guide the children in the various play groups to make connections with one another, and ultimately, helped children focus their activity into the letters, reports and final presentations for parents.

Melanie and Daria's teacher and other teachers who use scaffolding to support, focus, or extend children's play make decisions among a variety of options which include those listed on Table 1 (see page 16).

When young children through the primary grades utilize their naturally occurring propensity to learn through play, and when teachers employ effective scaffolding techniques, a stimulating, personal, and highly intellectual ambiance is created. Along with this intellectually stimulating environment, children are constructing the concepts that are basic to literacy as well as other curricular areas.

As children play, they are successfully mastering personal cognitive challenges. When teachers use effective scaffolding techniques, they can feel confident that they are truly tuning into and working with each child at that child's individual level of development.

Getting Started

Support is needed for the inclusion of play as a legitimate learning strategy and as a base for literacy development in the public schools. Certainly play cannot become the exclusive means for learning in preschool or in the primary grades, but research and practice have demonstrated the advantages and efficacy of play-based approaches in young children's classrooms. Teachers who acquire the dispositions and skills to use the natural connections made by play with literacy and other learning throughout kindergarten and the primary grades will discover a potent resource to energize thought and enhance the curriculum.

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Unexpected Success

by Penny Roundtree

When I went in for my evaluation last year, I told my administrator that I was looking for a new challenge. I was considering teaching a different grade level. He said he would keep his ears open and let me know when he knew of any staff changes for the following year.

Two weeks later I was contacted by the administrator of the Alternative Night School. He understood that I had received my reading endorsement and was looking for a new challenge. He asked me if I would be interested in teaching Reading, grades 9-12 two evenings a week. I told him I would discuss it with my family and let him know the following week.

My position started two weeks later. The first meeting with my new class proved to be tense. Their feelings toward reading were very negative. Though the class was a requirement, some students were surprised to learn that I actually expected them to read! One student came in after I had just explained my expectations. He barged into the class and announced, "I hate reading! Man, I can't stand reading! I don't want to take this stupid class!" I walked over to him and said, "Why don't you give this class a chance before you decide that reading is stupid." In front of all the other students he said, "I ain't never read a whole book in my life, 'cause reading sucks!" Not wanting him to continue running down the reading program in front of the other students, I asked him to leave. He left and attempted to check out of class. The principal told him that he could not graduate without the reading course. I conferenced with Jeremy during the break and somehow talked him into staying in the class. He shared his fear of reading with me. My heart really went out to this kid. He had told me he had been in the low reading group ever since he was in school and how it had made him feel dumb. I told him I wanted to help him graduate.

"I ain't never read a whole book in my life, 'cause reading sucks!"

My new challenge had just begun. Since I was teaching fourth grade at the time, I decided to use my students to help teach my class. My night school students became pen pals and special guest readers with my fourth graders. Jeremy was so popular in my classroom that the children begged to have him back. During my prep-period I met with Jeremy and introduced him to children's literature. He was then exposed to many authors and their books. The students were always understanding when he was reading to them and came to difficult vocabulary. When he read unfamiliar vocabulary, he stopped and asked one of the younger students to look the word up in the dictionary. The meaning was then shared with the whole class. We invited him to our Read-Ins, which were times when we brought our favorite books and snacks. When we were having partner reading, all of the students anxiously waited for their turn to read with Jeremy. He came to our class at least once a week. He also joined the students at recess, lunchtime and on our field trips. His task was to turn my class on to reading, and he was doing an exceptional job!

I also chose to use children's literature in my night class with the other students. They all wrote new endings to stories, such as *Jumanj* and *Two Bad Ants* by Chris Van Allsberg, and shared them with my class. They also proofread stories my fourth graders wrote.

Jeremy's academic growth was astounding! He is in my advanced reading group this year. Jeremy was a few minutes late for class the other evening. When he walked in, he said, "Don't have a cow, I was at the library!" He said that one of his favorite movies was *Dracula*. I had always told the class that if you have a favorite movie, most of the time, the book is much better. He held up the book and said, "I'm going to see which is better the movie or the book." We are currently reading *The Firm*, by John Grisham.

Naturally, I'm extremely proud of Jeremy's accomplishments. He'll be graduating in May, and some of my students and I will be eagerly watching him receive his diploma.

About the author:

Penny Roundtree teaches Chapter One Reading in Ontario, Oregon, and at the Payette Alternative night school. Last year she taught 4th grade in Payette, Idaho.

Celebration of Excellence Award

There are wonderful teachers in Idaho who often operate in relative anonymity, known only to the teachers, parents, and students in their locality. ICIRA provides incentive grants to encourage those teachers to share the materials and ideas they have developed with all teachers of reading in Idaho. To this end, we need the help of local councils.

The Idaho Council encourages its local affiliate councils to seek out and recognize the innovation and excellence of a teacher or group of teachers in its area. The Program Committee for the Idaho Council will showcase selected examples of such teaching excellence at the Fall Conference of ICIRA. A $100 stipend per selected program is offered to help defray conference costs for the person(s) involved.

Local councils have the following tasks:

1. Notify their membership of this opportunity to present their ideas/ techniques to Idaho's teachers of reading.

2. Make available to interested parties a copy of the conference call for proposals.

3. Receive completed proposal forms in advance of state deadlines and choose one proposal as their council's nominee.

4. The Council will then send its nomination for this award to the Program Chair for the fall conference. The Program Chair has the right to reject a proposal, or to ask that it be altered to suit the particular needs of the conference.

The person(s) applying for the "Celebration of Excellence" Award has the following tasks:

1. Complete the proposal form completely and return it to the local council liaison in a timely manner.

2. Attend the Fall Conference of ICIRA. Persons presenting will be expected to pay their own expenses, including conference registration, but a $100 stipend to help offset those expenses will be paid per accepted proposal.

3. Each team is strongly urged to prepare a paper for submission to the editorial board of PORTALS. This will allow the good ideas of Idaho teachers to reach the 2000 or more members and friends who receive Idaho's reading journal.

Individuals or groups selected to present at the state conference will be given special recognition by the Conference Program Committee. Local councils are encouraged to promote press releases which give appropriate local recognition to the accomplishments and the recognition being afforded teachers in their area.

Please join with us in helping to identify and recognize the excellence of Idaho Teachers. The Idaho Council of the International Reading Association is committed to promoting and disseminating knowledge about reading research and successful educational practices. Much of that action is occurring right now in our state. Please help us locate and "Celebrate Excellence" within our profession.

Program Proposal forms are available within this issue of PORTALS or from: Susan Buescher, P.O. Box 676, McCall, ID 83638. If you are a member of ICIRA, and you have a successful program/ technique which you would be willing to present at the Fall Conference, please complete a program proposal form and submit it to your local council president.

Call for Program Proposals

Idaho Council of the International Reading Association
October 6 & 7, 1994
Capital High School
Boise, Idaho

Literacy Opens Windows to the World

Proposals should address one of the following strands and reflect the conference theme:

The World of Research
The World of Assessment and Instruction
The World of Whole Language
The World of Literature

Complete the program proposal form and send to: Susan Buescher P.O. Box 676, McCall, ID 83638

1. Person Submitting Proposal Include:
   Name
   Institution Affiliation
   Position and/or Title
   Mailing Address
   Home Phone
   Work Phone

2. Title of the Proposal (as you wish it to appear in the program)

3. Strand Category (Check one only).
__ Research
__ Assessment/Instruction
__ Whole Language
__ Literature

4. Intended Audience (Check one only).
__ Elementary (Early childhood)
__ Elementary (Upper grades)
__ Elementary (All levels)
__ Middle School/Junior High
__ Secondary (All levels)
__ General K-12

5. Brief Program Summary of objectives, method of presentation, and content (Please be specific so that we may adequately consider your proposal).

6. Workshop description for program (not more than 25 words).

7. Biographical Sketch to be included in the program and to be used by a facilitator to introduce you to the audience (not more than 50 words).

8. Audiovisual Equipment: An overhead projector and screen will be provided at the request of the presenter. If you need additional equipment, please contact the program chairperson so that prior arrangements can be made regarding cost. List equipment needed.

9. Would you agree to be a moderator ?
Yes ___ No ___

Note: As a professional, nonprofit organization, the Association is unable to provide travel and/or living expenses for program presenters.

Procedure and Deadline for submitting Proposals: Proposals must be submitted by June 15, 1994. All Applicants will be notified of acceptance by July 30. Presenters will be expected to pay ICIRA membership dues for 1993-1994 prior to the conference. Conference fees for presenters will be paid by ICIRA.

Update on U.S. Standards Project for English Language Arts

Editorial Note: The U.S. Standards Project for the English Language Arts is a joint venture of the International Reading Association (IRA), Center for the Study of Reading, and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). The accompanying article is an update on the important work of this group taken from Reading Today, *a bimonthly publication of the IRA. Additional information about this project, as well as information and announcements about IRA activities, comes to all IRA members through* Reading Today. *We encourage all ICIRA members to join the IRA.*

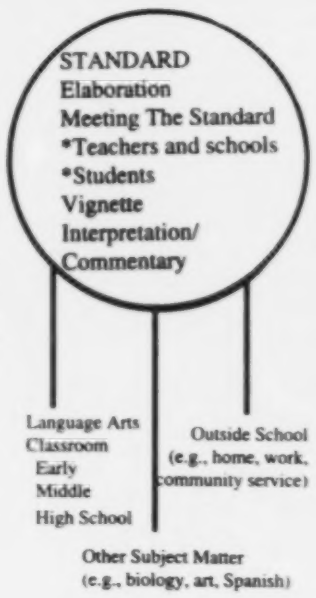
Members of the planning group and management team for the U.S. Standards Project for English Language Arts met in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, January 6-9 to further refine the project framework, to revise existing standards, and to prepare new ones.

Project officials were also preparing for a site visit to Champaign/Urbana by the federal funding agency for the project. As *Reading Today* went to press, that site visit was tentatively scheduled for the end of January. At that time, federal officials were to review the project's progress and discuss the continuation proposal that the project submitted seeking additional funding.

As they worked on the project framework during recent meetings, leaders of the Standards Project for English Language Arts developed a model to illustrate how the three strands (reading, writing, and language) interact. A draft of that model appeared in the December/January issue of *Reading Today*.

Project leaders have also devised a diagram to illustrate the "Anatomy of a Standard." The diagram shows the components of each standard and illustrates that the standards will affect language arts classrooms at various levels, the teaching of other subject matter, the settings outside of school.

Anatomy of a standard



Project leaders have also developed some proposed standards for English language arts. Much of the work this fall went into incorporating suggestions from the field, as well as working to satisfy the requirements of the federal funding agency.

The standards and formats shown here are still in their draft stage and subject to change. They will become part of the next round of professional materials to be

circulated throughout the field for comment.

Language

Standards in this strand involve speaking, listening, and performing:

- Become a competent user of spoken, global English.
- Become proficient in a second language.
- Build on home language to extend and enrich concepts.
- Communicate effectively with varied audiences using various means/ media.
- Present ideas clearly to persuade, to inform, and to entertain.
- Develop strategies for code switching and dialects.
- Talk and discuss to clarify thought.
- Participate as a member of various language communities.
- Appreciate various language communities.

Writing

Standards in this strand involve composing with words, film, video and technology:

- Write for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Write in a variety of forms.
- Use writing process activities strategically.
- Use a variety of knowledge bases (personal, textual, and observational).
- Demonstrate competence in standard edited prose.
- Participate in a community of writers.
- Compile a portfolio of work and self-assessment of work.

Reading

Standards in this strand involve making sense of texts, including literature and practical texts, illustrations, and technological displays:

- Understand and appreciate what is read.
- Critically analyze and evaluate what is read.
- Learn to make sense of a symbolic system of written language.
- Synthesize and integrate across information sources.
- Read strategically.
- Read as members of a community.
- Read for many purposes.
- Read widely.

The Standards Project for English Language Arts continues to welcome feedback from people throughout the education community. The project also hopes to establish a network of chartered task forces of educators throughout the United States. These groups will provide ongoing feedback to the project. For further information about the project or information on establishing a chartered task force, contact: Gail Keating, IRA, 800 Barksdale Rd., P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA. Telephone: 800-336-READ, ext. 226.

Correction

In the fall issue of PORTALS it was Dan Gibbonsen who submitted the artwork for Caleb's Journal.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION Local Council # _____ 5/93

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Membership with any THREE journals	US$75.00 ☐	US$125.00 ☐
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Choice of Journal(s) (please check)

The Reading Teacher (elementary) ☐ Journal of Reading (secondary) ☐

Reading Research Quarterly ☐ Lectura y Vida ☐

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When paying by check or money order, enclose this membership form with your check, made payable to the IRA, in a stamped envelope and mail to:

International Reading Association

800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, Delaware 19714-8139, USA

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Operation Wishbook:
A Little Magic, A Lot of Love and Some Tears

Firman

By Lynne Ball

The Jaycee's of Mountain Home who helped with the distribution of books for Operation Wishbook in the Oregon Trail Council brought back a touching story. Airmen from the Mountain Home Air Force Base volunteered to distribute gift baskets to families in need. One young airman "found" the wrong house. A single mother of four answered the door, then burst into tears. She was thrilled that people cared about her and her children. She said that she didn't think her family would have any Christmas this year. The airman didn't have the heart to tell her he was at the wrong house. Fortunately, there was plenty of food, books, and toys to cover the "right" family.

One could tell that she was not used to being in such a situation. A young mother with four children picked out four books each with tears streaming down her cheeks.

Another mother was so grateful to get the help. Then she spied the beautiful book with silver pictures. She desperately wanted it for her family. The volunteer giving it to her softly whispered, "That's from us!"

A mother without teeth, very carefully picked each book so it would fit her children exactly.

They passed up the many toys, clothes, and food, spending most of their spare time looking through all the books.

OPERATION WISH BOOK

Sometimes some of our own students get these books. After Christmas, a junior high student ran to his teacher with a book clutched to his chest. His first words to her were, I got a *Goosebumps* book! I got a *Goosebumps* book! You know all that money we raised to buy books for kids for Christmas? My aunt picked out this book for me! Can you believe that? For me!" He excitedly opened the book and proudly displayed the OPERATION WISH BOOK book plate.

Christmas books, books for babies, primary picture books, and chapter books lay in great array on the tables for mothers, fathers and other relatives to pick out as Christmas presents for their children. All were so grateful to be given the gift of reading at this time of the year. Many, many parents expressed gratitude for the help in picking out books because they themselves were not readers. They wanted their children to be able to read and become excited about reading!

The young volunteers were also captivated by the book table. They passed up the many toys, clothes, and food, spending most of their spare time looking through all the books. They were even found scrambling through the book boxes in the back room!

These and many more memorable situations were observed by the volunteers who helped distribute the books for this year's campaign of OPERATION WISH BOOK. Over 9,600 books were collected this year in the state of Idaho! Think of the many lives that have been touched and may be touched for a lifetime.

We thank all the many, volunteers who have so unselfishly given of their time and resources to participate in this year's campaign. We also thank the gracious, generous sponsors who, year after year, enthusiastically support OPERATION WISH BOOK. We are truly in their debt. The initiating sponsors were, and still are: McDonald's Restaurants, KTVB TV Channel 7 Boise, K106 fm, the Boise School District, and participating book stores. Without them, OPERATION WISH BOOK would never have been. The Plantation Optimists, Capital City Kiwanis, and Soroptimists have been the original volunteer organizations donating literally hundreds and hundreds of hours.

As Carlyle has so aptly stated, "All that mankind has done, thought, gained, or been, it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of books". Through OPERATION WISHBOOK, we hope to impart a little magic, and a lot of love for reading, to change lives forever!

About Operation Wishbook

Operation Wishbook is a service project of ICIRA that originated four years ago in the Boise Reading Council with the guidance of Lynne Ball. Local reading councils participating in Operation Wishbook solicit and collect donations of books to be included in gift baskets for needy families to be distributed at Christmas time. Each council uses a different distribution network. It has been a ICIRA statewide project for two years. In the four years of its existence, 24,000 books have been collected and distributed. This year six ICIRA councils; Boise , Horizons, Magic Valley, Oregon Trail, Pan Handle, and Southeast Reading Council have participated and reported their results to the project coordinator, Lynne Ball. Other councils who participated can still report. Others who would like information about how to participate should contact Lynne Ball, 891 Lander, Boise, ID 83703.

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Writing to Read

by Mini Cassia Council

The Writing to Read program was implemented in the Southwest School in the fall of 1993. The program is a computer-based instructional system designed to develop the writing and reading skills of the first grade classes. The program is published by IBM.

The system works within the context of a planned learning center. A variety of equipment and language arts material is organized in learning stations.

In the Writing to Read system, students learn the alphabet and begin to spell. They keyboard at the computer, develop the ability to express their own ideas, and use the typewriter to write words and also their stories. They listen to their favorite books and tapes and play Make-A-Word to learn vowels (long and short), blends, endings, beginning sounds and rhyming. They use manipulatives to learn the skills of writing and reading, arrange magnetic letters to write words, and read their stories to peer or teachers. The writing develops from drawings, to letters, to words to phrases to sentences, to their own stories.

Writing to Read helps students to discover for themselves that listening, speaking, writing and reading are all part of their way of communicating. As they write they are learning to read.

We have had many success stories to tell of children's growth and development through the Writing to Read program.

As they write they are learning to read.

Aubrie's work on Writing to Read.

aubrie bugs are brown and blac tha hav litl tels tha bit you

it hrs vere bad sum bugs are poyznis you can git vere sic frum it ther are blac witos

tha hav red spost if tha bit you you wil git vere sic you

Book Reviews

by Emi Beagarie
Karen Glennon
Roberta Peña

Picture Books:

Botas Negras, *(1993) Margarita Gonzales-Jensen and illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez, New York: Scholastic ISBN 0-590-29185-8*

If you are a bilingual educator looking for a new book to add to your class library this is the book for you. Full of Mexican history and culture, *Botas Negras* is the story of an eight year old boy named Neto from Monterrey, Mexico. The year is 1830, and his family is being split up because of internal conflicts in the country. Fortunately, Neto befriends a little lamb that keeps him company during this difficult time. The emotion and symbolism in this story will undoubtedly evoke both sympathy and thought from children who are fortunate enough to get an opportunity to read this book. It is currently available in Spanish and it will soon be released in English.

The Alphabet From Z to A (With Much Confusion on the Way), *(1991) Judith Viorst, illustrated by Richard Hull, New York: Atheneum, ISBN 0-689-31768-9.*

There are several things that make this alphabet book unique. First, as the title suggests, the sequence of the letters is in reverse. Next, there is a confusing array of "sound alike" words used: son and sun, see and sea, and two, too and to. The artwork adds more words to each letter sound with pictures to be unscrambled and named. There is a key in the back to help with identification of the items. This is a fun way to study letters for those who already know the alphabet.

Grandfather's Journey, *(1993) Allen Say, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, ISBN 0-395-57035-2.*

The winner of the 1994 Caldecott Medal, *Grandfather's Journey* is outstanding and worthy of such recognition. Using family experiences, Allen Say shares a unique view of living within two cultures. Beautiful paintings accent the words as Say tells of his grandfather's life in America and Japan. The author learns to share a love for two countries with his grandfather. Through that love, he comes to know his grandfather and understand his life.

The Sweetest Fig, *(1993) Chris Van Allsburg, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, ISBN 0-395-67346-1.*

Bibbot, the dentist, is not a very likable man. He is unkind to his patients, thinks only of money, and is cruel to his small dog, Marcel. One day, in exchange for his services, he receives two magic figs. Once he discovers their power, he can change his life forever; but in typical Van Allsburg style, the story contains a twist. Will the magic work in favor of Bibbot? This new treat from Chris Van Allsburg will surprise and delight readers of all ages.

Raven: A Trickster Tale from the Pacific Northwest, *(1991) Gerald McDermott, San Diego: Harcourt Brace ISBN 0-15-265661-8.*

Raven, a popular character in many Native American tales, is using his magic and clever wit to help the people find light for their gloomy world. He must outwit the Sky Chief to find out where the light is hidden and take it to the people. Brilliant artwork highlights this traditional tale with bright and rich native colors. *Raven* received a Caldecott Honor Medal for 1994, becoming McDermott's third book to gain recognition from the Caldecott Award. This book should be included in any study of the Pacific Northwest or folk tales.

Bub: The Very Best Thing, *(1994) Natalie Babbitt, New York: Harper Collins, ISBN 0-0-205044-3.*

The King and Queen have an argument about how to raise the Prince. The King says the Queen is spoiling the Prince with too many toys and making him soft. The Queen says the King is giving him too many lessons, and he will turn out as dry and dusty as they are. When the argument is over, they decide they both want the very best thing for the Prince, but since they are young parents, neither is sure what that is. The Prince, the Court Jester, and the cook's daughter already know the very best thing is love. The illustrations in this book are engaging and allow the reader to see an answer that the young King and Queen never find.

The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig, *(1993) Eugene Trivizas, illustrated by Helen Oxenbury, New York: Macmillan, ISBN 0-689-50569-8.*

If you buy one children's book for laughter, this one is it. "Once upon a time, there were three cuddly little wolves and a big bad pig" so starts this hilarious parody

which dispels the myth of the big bad wolf of fame and fable." This pig wasn't called big and bad for nothing. He comes with pneumatic drill, and explosives when his breath won't do the damage! How the pig changes his ways is amusing and the illustrations are perfect.

My Momma's Little Ranch on the Pampas, *(1993) Maria Cristina Brusca, New York: Henry Holt and Company, ISBN 0-8050-2782-3.*

The author's tale of her first year spent on a ranch, owned and operated by her mother, on the pampas of Venezuela is interesting, if a bit wordy. Momma buys the ranch and operates it, and Daddy drives out from the city on weekends in this liberated tale. Momma is every inch the business-woman and life on the ranch is realistic, including the Cesarean birth of a calf. The end papers have followed a new breed and have a map of South America. The vocabulary used in the story is illustrated. This is a strong social studies addition.

Poetry

I Want to Be, *(1992) Thylias Moss, illustrated by Brian Pinkney, New York: Dial, ISBN 0-8037-1286-3*

This lovely, long poem is glowingly illustrated by Brian Pinkney. It gives one young girl's answer to the age old adult question of "What do you want to be?" Pinkney's illustrations are vibrant and full of the life she reaches out to grasp with all the joyous imagination of childhood.

Zoe's Sheep, *(1993) Rose Bursik, New York: Henry Holt, ISBN 0-8050-2530-8.*

When Zoe cannot get to sleep her father tells her to try counting sheep. Zoe closes her eyes and tries it but... "Sheep number one liked to dance" and sheep number two is even worse!" This colorful lighthearted counting rhyme is fanciful furor as Zoe's nocturnal visitors prove noisy, obnoxious, and difficult to eliminate.

Non Fiction

Searching for Laura Ingalls: A Reader's Journey, *(1992) Kathryn Lasky and Neribah Knight, New York: Macmillan, ISBN 0-0275-1666-0*

A combination diary and travelogue of one young reader's journey to the places where the real Laura Ingalls Wilder lived. Meribah Knight finds unexpected surprises and a few disappointments. A nice book for young Laura Ingalls Wilder fans.

The Hidden Children, *(1993) Howard Greenfeld, New York: Ticknor and Fields, ISBN 0-3956-6074-2.*

Numerous first person accounts and details of the lives of the children hidden by others during the Holocaust. Some were abused, some were loved, but all were old before their time. This gripping nonfiction read is full of photographs and a must for Holocaust studies.

Young Adult

Skylark, *(1993) Patricia MacLachlan, New York: Harper Collins, ISBN 0-06-023328-1.*

The sequel to the Newberry Medal winner *Sarah Plain and Tall* is as warm as the original. At the end of *Sarah Plain and Tall,* Anna says "Everybody was happy..." but the new family is tested by drought. Anna knows Sarah's name is not written in the land, and she misses the sea. Anna and her brother Caleb worry that she will not stay. When the drought forces Sarah to return to Maine with them, Jacob is left behind. They are afraid they will never be a family again. But as Anna says, "It will rain again." Love and faith are stronger than the land, and this family will survive both good and bad weather.

Flip-Flop Girl, *(1993) Katherine Paterson, New York: Lodestar Books, ISBN 0-525-67480-2.*

Vinnie Mason is confused, hurt, and angry. Her daddy has died, her family has moved away from her best friend, and all attention has centered on her little brother Mason, who has stopped talking. Her new teacher, Mr. Clayton, is one of the few good things in her life, but then it seems to her that she might lose him too. Vinnie's only friend is Lupe, a poor girl who wears the flip-flops to school each day. She nearly loses this tentative friend before she learns something about love, her brother, and friendship. Finally Vinnie realizes that because of her grief and anger, Lupe has not been the only flip-flop girl. This is a nice middle-grade read which touches on some serious topics in Paterson's usual gentle thoughtful way.

Between Madison & Palmetto, *(1992) Jacqueline Woodson, New York: Delacourte, ISBN 0-38S-30906-6*

The third book about Margaret and Madison's friendship goes through further changes in their lives. Both girls deal with puberty, Margaret's bulimia, Madison meeting her father, and new friends. This trilogy is a wonderful expression of love between two young black girls whose friendship gives them the strength to survive the pain of growing up, loss, and racism, whole and unshattered. This book ends with a new beginning of their friendship in an old way.

Night of the Fall Moon, *(1993) Gloria Whelan, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, ISBN 0-679-84464-3*

The sequel to *Next Spring an Oriole* is another nice middle grade historical. In 1840 Libby Mitchell sneaks away from home to attend a native celebration at her friend Fawn's village. Libby is rounded up with her friends, the Potawatomis, by soldiers forcing them off their land. Her hope of returning home shrinks as they put more distance between her and her home. This is a good multicultural historical for this age level.

Plain City, *(1993)* Virginia Hamilton, *New York: The Blue Sky Press ISBN 0-590-47364-6.*

Buhlaire Sims, now 12-years-old, is finding out that things don't always get easier as you grow up. Her mother, Bluezy Sims, a singer and dancer, travels a lot while Buhlaire lives with her aunts in the Water House area. No one ever speaks of her father. Buhlaire believes he is Missing in Action. There are things about her past that don't make sense now, including the facts about her father. Growing up means facing some hard realities with family and friends. Buhliare must decide how far she is willing to go to find her answers. Another excellent young readers book by Newbery author Virginia Hamilton.

Baby, *(1993) Patricia*

MacLachlan, New York: Delacorte Press , ISBN 0-385-31133-8

A basket is left on the front porch. It contains a note and a small baby girl. The note asks the family to take care of Sophie until her mother can return for her. Larkin and her friend, Lalo, are excited to have Sophie stay with them but not all the members of the family share their feelings. Some are reluctant to get to attached to this baby that they know they cannot keep. Through Sophie, the family learns how to deal with their own realities about loss, love, sharing, and togetherness. Patricia MacLachlan has another wonderful novel about family, caring and love.

Harris and Me, *(1993) Gary Paulsen, San Deigo: Harcourt Brace, ISBN 0-15-292877-4.*

A young city boy is sent for the summer to stay with his uncle, aunt, and cousins on a small out-of-the-way farm. He and his cousin, Harris, become playmates and partners in some wild adventures. From being kicked by a cow, attacked by a rooster, and swinging by a rope from the hay loft to the pig pen, the boys find a fine line between fun and danger. Gary Paulsen again writes an exciting boys' adventure story.

The Oxboy, *(1992) Anne Mazer, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, ISBN 0-679-84191-1*

This allegorical fantasy is written at a lower level and is short (109 pages), yet it has a much higher concept level. Humanity's love/hate relationship with nature is explored through the life of the Oxboy, the child of a marriage between a human and a talking animal. In this mythical world, where such mixed marriages were common in the old days, it has recently become illegal. The law is enforced by Nazi-like death squads, which remove those of impure blood from the people. This book, because it is an allegory, is fairly black and white. It would be a great book to use with older classes dealing with prejudice, or the question of people vs. nature themes as a takeoff point.

Dakota Dream, *(1994) James Bennett, New York: Scholastic, ISBN 0-590-46680-1*

This book is one of the best of this spring's young adult novels. Floyd Rayfield has been tossed between foster homes and institutions for most of his life. He must find a place for himself. . . a place to belong. He finds that place in a vision about whom he really is and from then on his life has a purpose; a destiny. His vision makes him believe something so different that the authorities decide he is crazy. One woman, to new to be burned out by the system, believes in and fights for him. Yet he must go on his own hanblecheya, or vision quest, before he can come to grips with who he is and his future. It is his turning point.

Floyd is a unique character with a very individual voice, but what he is doing is a task all young adults must complete to be whole. I believe students will connect with Floyd on that level. This book is a must.

About the reviewers:
Emi Beagarie is a student at Boise State University.

Karen Glennon is a teacher in Nampa and works in a Boise book store.

Roberta Peña manages a children's section in a Boise book store.

The book review section is open to any submissions for children's literature as well as professional books.

Passion To Teach
Desire To Learn

Once upon a time, not too many years ago
There was a brand new teacher with a certain
kind of glow.
She had high expectations for every child in her
class,
But never felt quite comfortable teaching to
the mass.

Textbooks aligned her lessons. . . not much thought
involved.
No creative endeavor and certainly no problems
solved.
"How could this be teaching?" a voice would call
each day.
"There's no passion in my teaching when it's done
this way!"

Soon she got the kids involved in meaningful
learning tasks.
Like writing songs and dancing and designing
tribal masks.
Their questions began to flow and correct answers
were seeked out.
Everyone got involved, and that's what learning's
all about!

Now, children's work is everywhere and tradebooks
line the shelves.
Students take pride in achievement and display
desire to learn themselves!

by Suzanne Gregg
Second Grade Teacher Garfield Elementary
Boise, ID

An Over-Winded Clock

Something else
A phrase mounted like a dumb man
A story of two people, or some other story
that's what he's trying to remember

He fails
all alone
It's his own imagination

made sense
In his platonic alienation

he was alone

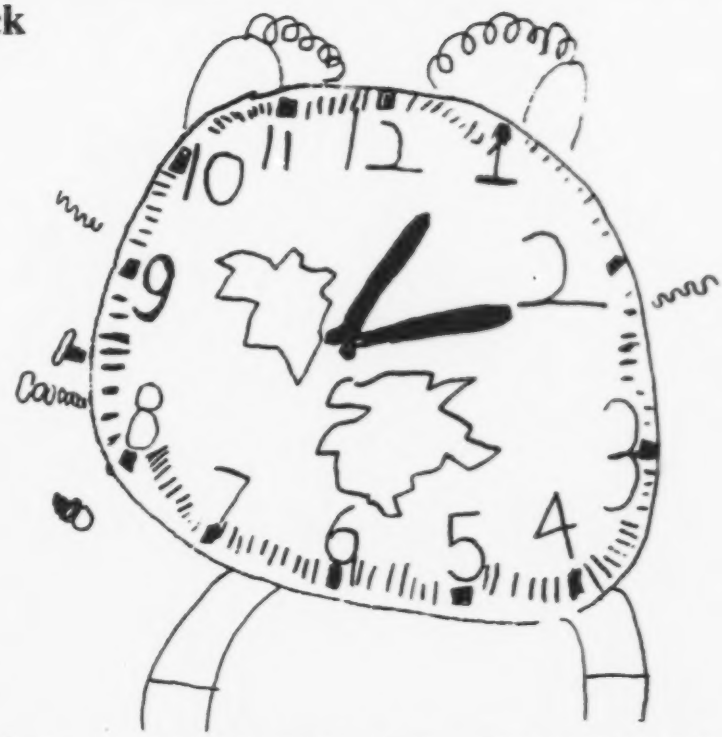
something different

His mind would no longer romp like
the mind of God[1]

He couldn't make that something up.

by Marisa Jacobs, A junior at Boise High School

[1]Adaptation of wording by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953, p.74.



Artwork done by Byron Wiseman, Mrs. Gregg's 2nd grade class, Boise School District.

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❑ Three Rivers ❑ Tamarack ❑ Snake River ❑ Mini-Casia ❑ Boise R.C.
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Practical Classroom Hints

by Horizons Reading Council

From the Editor: Thanks to the Horizons Reading Council for providing teaching ideas for this issue. As you read these great suggestions, consider sending in your successes. I challenge every council throughout Idaho to submit at least one idea along with photographs and/or drawings.

When you get a new book for your classroom, write, on the inside cover, any books or other materials that would have associated activities (such as Connecting Math with Literature, Connecting Science with Literature, *Reading Rainbow*, etc.). This will keep you from forgetting activities that extend your possibilities.

If you have access to a computer, log all your book titles by categories. Then when you need a book from a particular category, it's very easy to find.
Bobbi Tomlin
2nd Grade Teacher
Lake Hazel Elementary

Use nursery rhymes in a unit to help beginning readers. I made puppets (with popsicle sticks) with the characters of "Hey Diddle Diddle" for the students to act out. I use the pocket chart with sentence strips. The flannel board and overhead centers are also excellent ways to encourage reading of familiar rhymes. We also did innovations of rhymes with our themes. For example:

1,2 witch's brew
3,4 ghosts galore
5,6 pumpkin sticks
7,8 bats are great
9,10 a big skeleton

and

Grr, grr black bear
Have you any hair?
Yes sir, yes sir
three bags to share.
One for Mama Bear,
One for Papa Bear,
One for the little cub
Who lives in a cave.

My class does a birthday book for the birthday boy or girl. Each child writes about the child and illustrates his/her page. After we put the book together, each student reads his/her page to the birthday child who then gets to take it home.
Rebecca Auston
1st Grade Teacher
Lake Hazel Elementary

I have my class do SSR right after recess. They really look forward to it so they come in and get settled quickly and quietly. For these same reasons, I read aloud to them after a recess, also. When reading aloud any book -- text or not -- I pause when I want the class to supply the word. This keeps them listening attentively, comprehending, and

D.O.L. With A Twist

To help improve the editing skills of intermediate students many teachers use Daily Oral Language (D.O.L.). This is effective in helping students correct common errors within a given sentence. What D.O.L. doesn't do is help students identify complete sentences in their work. A fellow teacher gave me a suggestion for an activity to help students sharpen their editing skills. Find a paragraph and remove all punctuation and capitalization, misspell some of the words they should know, and make some language usage mistakes that your class has worked on. Display this paragraph on the overhead and have students edit the paragraph, working independently, in small groups, or as a whole class activity. At first, students will want to take out words or add words to make the paragraph make sense, but remind students that, with proper punctuation and usage, the paragraph will make sense. When they have completed editing the paragraph, have the students read the paragraph to a small group or the whole class to see if their editing is complete. Often during this oral reading they will catch mistakes they have overlooked. Students may not be very successful the first couple of times they do this activity, but with repetition their editing skills will improve. This activity may be used with several paragraphs at a time.

Don Janzen
4th grade teacher, Lake Hazel Elementary

using context clues all at the same time. They enjoy the good feeling of knowing/ predicting the correct word. *Hint ...only pause on words that you're sure most of them will be able to supply.

Read poems in different voices to add sparks to poetry.

Sandi English
5th grade teacher

Here are some more ideas for pattern writing books:

I like _____ ,but I don't like _____.
I know _____, and I want to learn _____.

Kathy Peugh
1st grade Teacher
Lake Hazel Elementary

21 Classroom Hints

1. Adopt a favorite book or author.
2. Select an author daily and read his/her work.
3. Variety -- expose students to poetry, newspaper, magazines, etc.
4. Candid Camera -- use Polaroid camera to catch readers in best-loved spots.
5. Hold a drawing -- students submit a slip for each book read for prizes.
6. Contest -- for most books read.
7. Write letters to favorite authors - addresses in "Books in Print."
8. Footprints are made for each book read and stapled around the room.
9. Involve family --suggest time set aside for family reading.
10. Senior Citizens can be involved.
11. Dress up Day -- students come dressed as their favorite character.
12. Reading Corner -- books, pillows, rugs.
13. Team Reading Contest -- by pairs or groups.
14. Adopt a Reader --older students adopt a younger student to read to.
15. Class Book Exchange.
16. Make a project to display about favorite book -- decorate classroom door, etc.
17. Buy a book for the library.
18. Invite a guest in to read the class.
19. Have "Runch" one day. Children eat lunch in the classroom and either are read to, or read to themselves.
20. Trivia questions about familiar books and characters.
21. Reader's paper chain -- for each book read.

Rebecca Auston
1st grade teacher
Lake Hazel Elementary

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Council Activities That Tickle Your Gizzard

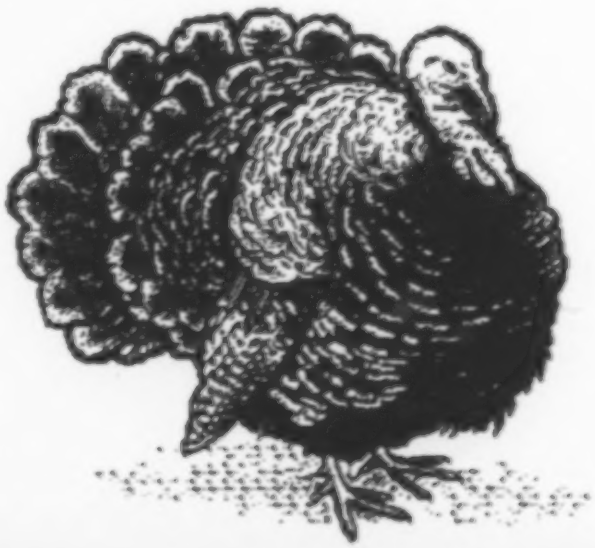
Council News

by Nancy Valiquette

Don't get your feathers ruffled, but we've been robin some great ideas from councils all over Idaho. These activities can help you and your students take flight and soar together. Don't be a turkey! Try some!

Magic Reading Council found a magic formula for a successful project: treats, binders and lots of good sharing on a January Saturday morning. These ingredients were combined at a Share Fair at Kimberly Elementary School. Half-hour sessions were given on overviews of Frameworks, ELIC (Early Literacy Inservice Course), Reading Recovery, and laser discs. Mini-sessions followed with titles such as: *The Chocolate Touch, Retelling Stories, You're in the Movies, Read Any Good Math Lately?, It's All in How You Fold It, Story Props* and *New Books for a New Year.* Abundant treats and a binder for handouts were additional popular features.

Snake River Valley's winter reading promotion combined "I Love to Read Month" and the Winter Olympics with a challenge called READY, SET, READ! During the first week of the month each student set a realistic reading goal. The next week, the student tried to break his previous goal. The third week, he/she exceeded the second week's goal. The final week, he/she set a record for the month. Everybody was a winner! Teachers, principals, support personnel, and parents were also encouraged to participate. All the minutes spent reading in the SRVRC (Snake River Valley Reading Council) were compiled weekly among all the participating schools. A goal of SRVRC was to set a reading record that could be reported to the Guiness Book of World Records for the most minutes read in a single month.



Other News

Boise Council:

Kevin Booe of the Boise Library Children's Department discussed Young Reader's Choice books past and present in a January meeting.

Boise Reading Council and the Teacher Education Club sponsored part of the B.S.U. 1994 Spring Literacy Conference titled Award-winning Books in the Classroom. Guest speakers were author Louis Sachar, Librarian Nina Hawkins, 6th grade teacher Peggy McGee, and B.S.U. Graduate students.

Ben Mikaelson, author of *Rescue Josh McGuire*, spoke at the Council's Spring Banquet during the week he was visiting author at the Boise School's Young Authors' Conference.

South East Idaho Council:

The council invited an excellent speaker from Rentin, Washington, Lori Wachter who spoke on Strengthening Your Existing Program Through Authentic Instruction. She gave wonderful ideas on using books in the classroom.

The Spring Young Authors Conference will have two strands. The elementary strand will emphasize storytelling with many local Native American storytellers attending. The Secondary strand is titled *Writing: A View Through My Eyes* chaired by Leslie Meeks.

The Idaho Writers League will award a $25.00 savings bond to the elementary winners and a $50.00 savings bond to the secondary winners. They will help winning students edit and revise their work to make it publication ready and be student advocates to find a publisher. Contact Kathy Louris 237-5829 for further information.

Panhandle Council:

The council celebrated National Children's Book Week with a theme of Community Awareness. Students were involved in activities such as:

1. Reading to Senior Citizens in cooperation with Lake City Senior Center and Coeur d'Alene Homes.
2. Displaying table tents (see diagram) at the cafeteria at Kootenai Medical Center.

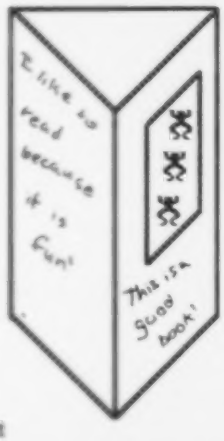


Table tent

Have you planned the fall calendar for your local council? As soon as you do, let us know your speakers and special events. Write to us at PORTALS.

College of Education,
Room E-705
Boise State University
Boise, ID 83725
(208) 385-3402

3. Displaying table tents at the Coeur d'Alene Library, local restaurants and banks.
4. Sending literature responses to the Coeur d'Alene Press to be published.
5. Sending taped messages about books and reading to be aired on KVNI Radio.

Some response ideas included:
My favorite book is _____ because _____.
The best book I ever read is _____ because _____.
I like when a book is read to me because _____.
My favorite author is _____ because _____.
Reading is important because _____.

Mini Cassia Council:

The May Young Author's Conference speaker will be Karen Glennon, author of *Miss Eva and the Red Balloon.*

We hope these ideas weren't too hard to swallow. They're free of charge. No bill!

The Great American Shootout

or

A Night in the Life of Horizons Reading Council

by Lynne Ball

It happened that fateful night, September 13 (no, not Friday). Alice McLerran, author of *Roxaboxen* and *The Mountain that Loved the Bird*, was relating her experiences as an author. More specifically, she was sharing her personal experiences in her touching story, *Roxaboxen*. She then lovingly related how the inspiration of the beautiful tale, *The Mountain that Loved the Bird*, came to her as she walked and relaxed in her beloved Washington forests.

Alice then graciously agreed to autograph many books for the Horizons Reading Council. The representative from Scholastic was also nearby, patiently showing books in the hall of Centennial High School (Meridian, Idaho).

The peace was totally shattered when the two front hall doors explosively opened, and several police officers commanded all to leave! Everyone stood about in disbelief, frozen as statues and unable to move. The officer repeated, "LEAVE NOW!"

All left the building in panic, hoping to find safety in the bushes, behind the gigantic planter, or behind the cars in the parking lot. They were totally unaware of the commotion's cause, knowing only that real trouble threatened! Looking back into the hall, one observer heard a shot and saw an officer fall as blue smoke obscured the hall. Panic added to panic! At that same moment, a fire engine, police cars, and TV vans arrived, adding to the turmoil. Many participants frantically fled in their vehicles.

Meanwhile, in the outer parking lot, Alice McLerran tenaciously continued autographing her books for those brave souls still around, by the dim light of a lone flashlight! Hurray for the courage of Alice McLerran!

The Scholastic representative, again patiently waiting to retrieve his books from the cordoned areas, stated, "I've been all over this nation and nothing like this has ever happened to me." And here it happened in the sleepy little town of Meridian.

News breaking the next day revealed that an irate, concerned parent came to school armed with a gun to help defend his son in an ongoing altercation with a group of boys. In the excitement, a SWAT Team police officer had shot himself in the leg with a semi-automatic weapon!

Well, as they say after the *Great American Shootout*, "All's well that ends well for the Horizons Reading Council!" If you ever want excitement, come to one of their meetings! You'll be sure to be entertained, educated and maybe, just maybe, given a little excitement!

Meanwhile, in the outer parking lot, Alice McLerran tenaciously continued autographing her books for those brave souls still around, by the dim light of a lone flashlight!

PORTALS

A Journal of the Idaho Council
International Reading Association

The editors of PORTALS invite all Idaho Council of the International Reading Association (ICIRA) members and others interested in literacy development to submit articles for publication. Articles must be postmarked by September 15 for the fall and February 15 for the spring editions.

PORTALS is the primary publication of the ICIRA and thus serves as a format to promote literacy development for all people in our state. The ICIRA is a major supporter of teachers of the Language Arts, and serves as an important resource for those teachers. Classroom teachers, especially, are encouraged to write about their practices, their action research projects, and issues affecting teachers, students, and the educational community.

Manuscript Form

Manuscripts should be word processed (or typewritten) and double-spaced on 8 1/2" X 11" paper. Manuscripts of various lengths will be accepted, but they typically should not exceed 12 pages including tables, figures, and references.

Articles appearing in PORTALS will eventually be formatted according to the style prescribed by the third edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 1983). Although authors are not required to use this style in their initial manuscript submission, they must include complete bibliographic information in their list of references.

Submitting A Manuscript

Submit *four* copies of all manuscripts along with two self-addressed, stamped letter-size envelopes for correspondence. All copies must be dark and clear. With the manuscript, please provide a separate cover page that includes the title, author(s), complete address(es), phone number(s), and institutional affiliation(s) of the author(s). If your manuscript has been word processed, please send a diskette with a copy of the manuscript. Indicate the format (Apple, Macintosh, or IBM), the software program used, and the file name.

Mail all submissions to:

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Boise State University
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The Review Process

Articles submitted to PORTALS are reviewed anonymously (blind review) by three members of the Editorial Advisory Board. Manuscripts are judged for their potential contribution to the field, usefulness to teachers or other educators, freshness of approach, quality of writing, and cohesiveness of presentation. Manuscript selection also depends on the editors' determination of the overall content balance of journal.

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